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BORN TO LOSE

Why Are the Homeless Mainly Single Men?

PETER MARIN

In America men are not supposed to be dependent. (Page 46)

EDITORIAL

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS

The press is again hounding John Sununu. This time the *Los Angeles Times* nailed him for using a corporate jet to fly home from a stamp-collectors' auction and a G.O.P. fundraiser.

In a previous editorial ("Crime and Punishment," May 13), we protested the media vendetta against this great public servant merely because he flew military planes on private business. The flap curtailed Sununu's jet-setting, but it also gave him a chance to dramatize the Bush Administration's commitment to privatization. Rather than simply switch to commercial airplanes, Sununu bucked up the corporate sector by flying on a Beneficial Corporation jet. Thus he reinforces the President's determination to shrink government and unleash the free market.

In Bush's New America people will have a choice: Poor women who want abortions will go to private physicians rather than to a clinic, and parents who wish to send their children to private schools can get a credit on their tax dollars. Deregulated banks will speculate in stocks with their depositors' money. Prisons, bridges, tunnels, covert operations will all be privatized.

Someday even wars will be privately financed so that the President need not go to Congress for the money. The government could raise some of the dough by selling the film and TV rights to media conglomerates (look what a bundle Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf will get for his memoirs). Say—maybe Sununu should fly to the Coast to huddle with MCA on terms.

REPARATIONS FOR RUSSIA?
ARNO MAYER

A DEMOCRAT WINS! (BARELY)
ANN HARRISON

THE BANDWAGON
TERRY SOUTHERN

EDITH WHARTON
ALEXANDRA JOHNSON

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LETTERS.

ENMESHED WITH DINESH

Washington

First David Corn accuses me of printing the names of members of Dartmouth's Gay Student Association and bragging about it ["Beltway Bandits," May 13]. When I provided evidence that this was false, Corn withdrew the accusation, only to advance another, equally erroneous one ["Letters," June 24].

This time Corn alleges that ten years ago I employed "some underhanded means" to secure a copy of Dartmouth's alumni mailing list and bragged, "Let them sue. They can't prove anything."

In fact, Dartmouth's alumni list is published in book form by the college administration. Copies are available to all students and alumni for a nominal fee. No pilfering was involved, as Corn implies. The legal issue was this: Dartmouth maintained that the list was copyrighted and *The Dartmouth Review* could not use addresses from it. The newspaper maintained that the list was published for the express purpose of encouraging members of the Dartmouth community to communicate with one another. Thus the comment attributed to me simply reflects my belief that the Dartmouth administration had no case—indeed no lawsuit was filed.

Your first false assertion about the *Review* and the Gay Students Association was picked up by *The New Yorker* and *The Village Voice*, from which I must now seek corrections. No doubt David Corn's porous memory will now cause me a second headache. My friends tell me not to waste my time because I should expect lies from the "loony left." I hope I am not naïve in holding you to a higher standard.

Dinesh D'Souza

CORN REPLIES: 'I WAS TOO GRACIOUS'

Washington

My thanks to Dinesh D'Souza for writing to *The Nation* not once but twice. Had it not been for his second complaint, I would never have found the lie contained in his first note.

Let's start at the beginning. In the original column, I reported that back in 1982 when D'Souza was a student at Dartmouth, I attended a luncheon of conservative college journalists and participated in a discussion with D'Souza, an editor of the infamous *Dartmouth Review*. I noted that D'Souza had boasted of improperly acquiring documents from the Dartmouth Gay Student Association and using them for an article that named members and included excerpts of personal letters written to the group. In a letter to this magazine, D'Souza cried foul. He claimed that the *Review* had not named members (just officers), that it had not published personal letters, that his source had been "documents filed with the college" and that the *Review* had not procured them through underhanded means. He was also kind enough to send along the article in question, which appeared in the May 18, 1981, edition of the *Review*. In that piece, the *Review* had indeed printed only the names of the officers. However, it also included quotes from "personal letters of students confessing their gay sentiments" found among G.S.A. documents. D'Souza also sent a follow-up to his original article, which reprinted facsimiles of G.S.A. documents that were, in fact, not publicly available.

In my June 24 "Correction and Amplification," I was too gracious. I accepted D'Souza's explanation that his G.S.A. article was based on "publicly accessible" information. I repeated D'Souza's assertion that the *Review* had relied on public documents filed with the college. But his 1982 boast to his colleagues was clear in my mind. I went rummaging and found a note that I wrote after the luncheon: "D'Souza took delight in revealing that his papers [*sic*] had indeed made illegal use of the [Dartmouth alumni] mailing list. 'Let them sue,' he chortled. 'They can't prove anything.' " Given his plausible explanation of the G.S.A. matter—I know, I shouldn't have given him the benefit of the doubt—I figured the boast must have applied to the mailing list. I noted so in my correction. That provoked the above D'Souza missive.

Now for a review of both episodes—the G.S.A. documents and the alumni mailing list. Regarding the former, I spoke with Dolores Johnson, director of student activities at Dartmouth (in 1981, she was director of the council on student organizations). She says that it is "absolutely untrue" that G.S.A. documents filed with the school were open to the public. The G.S.A., like all other student groups, did provide her office with a constitution and a list of officers, and the file on the G.S.A. might also have included correspondence between the group and the college. But, Johnson said, "I would never give that information out to the public." She further noted that before the *Review* story appeared, some documents disappeared from the desk assigned to the G.S.A. in what was then a student organization center in the basement of College Hall. (This fact was also reported in *The New York Times* on October 13, 1981.) These were the same documents, Johnson said, that were printed in the *Review*—the same documents D'Souza says he used for his story.

As for the alumni list caper, the *Review*'s use of it for a mailing caused a fuss on campus. The administration charged that the *Review* had misappropriated the list and committed a copyright violation. Cary Clark, Dartmouth's college counsel both then and now, recalls, "When all this happened, the *Review* said they got [the mailing list] from the Hopkins Institute [a Dartmouth alumni group not affiliated with the college]. They said, 'We didn't take your book; we got it from somebody else, who took your list.' "

I'm now uncertain which underhanded operation D'Souza was bragging about. But I hope our readers have not been distracted from the central point: D'Souza, who edited a paper that printed such witticisms as "Genocide means never having to say you're sorry" and "The only good Indian is a dead Indian," who ran an interview with a Klansman illustrated by a staged photograph of a black person hanging from a tree and who used purloined documents to "out" officials of the G.S.A., is now traipsing about the country calling for students and academicians to be more sensitive to the plight of what he considers a repressed minority on campus: people of conservative views. He is an inappropriate spokesperson for the worthy causes of tolerance and pluralism.

David Corn

FALLOUT IN IRAQ

Takoma Park, Md.

I found "High-Death Weapons of the Gulf War," Michael Klare's analysis of the near-nuclear weapons dropped on Iraq [June 3], insightful. However, I wish to correct Klare's claim that their use was "unaccompanied by radiation or radioactive fallout." Many of the antitank shells fired from U.S. tanks and airplanes contained depleted uranium, a waste byproduct of the uranium enrichment process for nuclear power and/or weapons. Depleted uranium is only mildly radioactive, but it has a half-life measured in *billions* of years and is extremely chemically toxic; tons of it were scattered throughout the fragile desert ecosystem. Uranium is coveted by the military for armor-piercing shells because it is extremely dense and burns when scattered into thousands of particles at the detonation of the shell's warhead.

In addition, the radiation contained in the two reactors bombed by the Central Command, each about as large as a university research reactor, was probably scattered into the environment. They were located in the suburbs of Baghdad. This was the first military assault on *operating* reactors in history.

Finally, although the United States did not detonate any nuclear weapons, it did deploy more than 1,000 hydrogen bombs in the region: at Turkish air bases, with the Mediterranean Sixth Fleet, on submarines in the gulf and the Indian Ocean, and at the U.S. Naval Base at Diego Garcia (which it has occupied illegally since the early 1970s, when its indigenous population was evicted to make way for the Navy).

Mark Robinowitz

CORRECTION

Due to fact-checking errors William Scherle's name was misspelled in Alexander Cockburn's June 10 "Beat the Devil" column; also, Tom Harkin served as an aide to Representative Neal Smith of Iowa, not to former Iowa Senator Dick Clark.

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CONTENTS.

Volume 253, Number 2

LETTERS
38

EDITORIALS
37 Private First Class
39 Censored Air
40 Owed to Russia — *Arno Mayer*
41 Employer Benefits — *Keith Brooks and Manny Ness*

COLUMNS
41 Father's Day Is Gone — *Calvin Trillin*
42 Beat the Devil — *Alexander Cockburn*
44 Beltway Bandits — *David Corn*
45 Watching Rights — *Aryeh Neier*

ARTICLES
46 Born to Lose: The Prejudice Against Men — *Peter Marin*
51 Lessons of a By-election: A Democrat Wins! (Barely) — *Ann Harrison*
54 The Last Preserve: Guatemala Guards Its Rain Forests — *Victor Perera*
56 The Dogs Bark But: The Bandwagon Moves On — *Terry Southern*

BOOKS & THE ARTS
59 Lewis, ed.: The Selected Short Stories of Edith Wharton; Brookner, ed.: The Stories of Edith Wharton, Vol. 2 — *Alexandra Johnson*
61 Kinzer: Blood of Brothers: Life and War in Nicaragua; Dematteis and Vail, eds.: Nicaragua: A Decade of Revolution — *Larry Bensky*
62 Book Note — *Eric Lott*
64 Films — *Stuart Klawans*
66 Music — *Gene Santoro*

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EDITORIALS.

Censored Air

In the vast Sahara of television broadcasting there are only a few scattered wadis where authentic, alternative, uncommodified, uncensored programming can live. These oases generally take the form of public access stations, those arcane stops high on the dial that cable companies are compelled, by local governments, to furnish in return for their lucrative monopolies. There's little else. Official "public television," underwritten by oil, chemical and aerospace conglomerates and breathed heavily upon by White House ideologues (the *real* P.C. police), is hopeless—a tasteless stew of shallow chatter, sublimated passions and elitist culture. Even the public access stations rarely fulfill their potential; cable companies and local broadcasting commissions would rather sell zircon rings on shopping shows or present amateurish home video productions à la "Wayne's World."

Across the limitless wastes, a couple of noncommercial, politically and culturally engaged broadcasting organizations have found ways to beam their unconventional product to "community television" channels. Paper Tiger Television is a New York media group that has been producing original TV material for ten years. Deep Dish TV, which it spawned, is pri-

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marily a distribution network for alternative (i.e., progressive, leftish or culturally experimental) programming, the kind you won't see on the commercial networks and only once in a blue moon on PBS. Deep Dish also produces some of the programs it uplinks to satellites, from which cable companies around the country downlink stuff for their public access channels.

Now Deep Dish is in deep trouble on the ideological battlefront. For political crimes only vaguely described, the group is being red-baited and rad-bashed, and the upshot is that its N.E.A. grant has not been renewed. And without large-foundation funding, there's no way alternative media can afford the costs of supposedly free air.

The trouble began a year ago at a hearing of the Independent Commission on the N.E.A., an ad hoc outfit set up to take some of the heat off the Endowment in dealing with politically or culturally "controversial" art. While questioning N.E.A. chair John Frohnmayer, a commissioner referred to a memo, which looked to be an internal N.E.A. document, charging that the Deep Dish TV network was "Fidel Castro's propaganda arm in the U.S." The anonymous memo had been slipped to commission member John Agresto at his hotel the night before the hearing. No substantiation of the charge was offered, and Deep Dish never heard the accusation. In fact, only last month did the N.E.A. locate its own copy of the memo, but it says the authorship cannot be determined.

The memo, obtained by *The Nation*, did not bait Deep Dish alone. Two projects involving gay teenagers were highlighted, as were grant applications for documentaries about Native American activist/prisoner Leonard Peltier and the late Michael Harrington, described as a "radical socialist." But Deep Dish was singled out in the hearing, perhaps because it is a potential, though tiny, challenge to the system by which broadcasting is controlled.

N.E.A. counsel Julianne Davis notified the Center for Constitutional Rights (which is looking into the campaign against Deep Dish) that "the origin of this document is a mystery." N.E.A. staffers are not so bewildered. One grant officer fingered a White House "mole" installed as a political gauleiter in Frohnmayer's office and later fired.

There was no shortage of topics in Deep Dish's schedule to stoke the ire of the Reagan-Bush right. In its 1989-90 season, Deep Dish distributed a half-hour documentary on TV Martí, the government's propaganda effort against Cuba. It was paired with another half-hour report on anticommunism. The same season, Deep Dish uplinked a one-hour compilation of excerpts from Cuban television. And after the Nicaraguan elections of February 1990, the network put on an address by outgoing President Daniel Ortega. None of those shows were actually produced by Deep Dish or funded from the N.E.A.'s $25,000 grant.

Deep Dish got a second N.E.A. grant, for the 1990-91 season, at the time that many arts organizations were debating the morality of accepting funds from the Endowment after the cancellation of awards to lesbian, gay and feminist artists. "The arts community was isolated," Steve Pierce, Deep Dish's director, explained. "The argument over N.E.A. grants was being portrayed as something of interest only to far-out artists. We saw it as symptomatic of a larger political struggle, involving gay and lesbian rights, reproductive rights, isolation of people of color, political prisoners." The network accepted the $35,000 and used it to produce and distribute a series on censorship. They might have included themselves among the censored, for it could be their last N.E.A. grant.

Owed to Russia

As the leaders of the world's seven major industrial and wealthiest countries prepare to meet with Gorbachev in London, they tend to see themselves as the Society of St. George, which has slain the Communist dragon. They interpret Boris Yeltsin's win in the Russian election (and the vote to rename Leningrad) as yet another victory for allegedly immaculate political pluralism and free market capitalism, and in exchange for further Soviet confessions of past sins and persistent errors they are magnanimously prepared to grant forgiveness in the form of heavily conditioned financial aid and technical assistance.

Perhaps the moment has come for the Western powers—and Japan—to take their turn in the confessional, to acknowledge their share of responsibility for the monstrous excesses of Stalinism. By intervening in the Russian Civil War of 1918 to 1920, the Allied and associated powers prolonged what became an exceptionally fierce conflict in which the Reds and the Whites were equally guilty of indiscriminate terror, both sides leaving tens of thousands of victims. This civil war left a legacy of deep-seated mental and institutional hardening among the Bolsheviks, which was intensified by the relentless quarantining of the Soviet Union and the forging of Poland and Romania into critical links of the *cordon sanitaire*.

Of course, the Soviet Union must accept the largest part of the blame for the savage collectivization of agriculture, the unfathomable purges, the murder of anarchists and Trotskyists in Spain and the Nazi-Soviet pact. But history demands that the Western powers confess their contribution, however indirect, to the spiral of violence: the refusal to normalize relations with Moscow in the 1920s, the appeasement of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in the 1930s, the abandonment of the Spanish Republic and the deliberate avoidance of a timely military alliance with Moscow in 1938-39. It is not to deny or minimize the heavy responsibility of the Soviet Union for the renewal of the cold war after 1945 to insist that the Western powers recognize their own responsibility for this mutually corrosive and dangerous confrontation, which in economic terms bankrupted the former while benefiting the latter.

Whatever the enormous miscalculations and misdeeds of their regime, the peoples of the Soviet Union have paid dearly in human lives and political oppression. As Gorbachev waits on the leaders of the Big Seven to ask—to plead—for economic assistance, President Bush and his colleagues should announce to their peoples and the world that they will meet the bulk of this request for aid as *Wiedergutmachung*—as reparation—for having treated the Soviet Union as a pariah nation from Lenin through Brezhnev, except from 1941 to 1945.

If, after 1945, the Western powers, largely for reasons of unremitting anti-Sovietism and anticommunism, decided to

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facilitate and subsidize the economic recovery and diplomatic rehabilitation of Germany and Japan, whose crimes against other peoples vastly exceeded those committed by the Soviet Union, they certainly can facilitate and subsidize *glasnost* and *perestroika*, in expiation for what history will record as their sins of commission and omission. ARNO MAYER

Arno Mayer is a professor of history at Princeton University.

Employer Benefits

The Bush Administration is rushing to declare the recession over, but in New York last Monday 6,000 city workers lost their jobs. Around the country the story is the same: people cast on a sea of uncertainty with bills to pay, children to feed and a measly twenty-six weeks of unemployment benefits.

One year into the recession, 8.6 million Americans are unemployed. Almost 7 million can find only part-time work or have dropped out of the job market. More than 2.6 million have exhausted all their unemployment benefits in the past twelve months—the latest victims of the erosion of the unemployment insurance system that began in the late 1970s. The sixty-five weeks of benefits available in 1975-77 have been cut to only twenty-six weeks today in all but a few states, and little more than one-third of the unemployed collect benefits, compared with two-thirds in the mid-1970s [see Brooks and Ness, "Out of Work? Out of Luck," December 24, 1990].

Bush's "kinder, gentler" presidency is proving to be even more meanspirited toward the unemployed than Reagan's, which reluctantly allowed an extension of unemployment benefits in 1982. And while Bush openly opposes any expansion of aid to the unemployed, the Democrats offer little more than lip service to the problem. A bill in the House of Representatives that would extend benefits and make other reforms in the system has floundered for months due to lack of support from the Democratic leadership. In the Senate, legislation was finally introduced on June 13, but it is disappointingly weak. Although benefits have been extended in previous recessions with an unemployment rate of 6 percent, this bill would take effect in some states only if the national rate reaches 7 percent (it is now at 6.9 percent). Both the Democrats and the Republicans seem determined to make it through this recession without doing anything to aid the unemployed.

Both also share the same fiscally conservative assumptions. In defense of their inaction, Democrats often cite their 1990 budget deal with the White House agreeing not to incur new spending without raising taxes or making cuts elsewhere. But why do they concede the necessity of raising money to pay for extended benefits when it already exists in unemployment trust funds supplied through a tax on employers? The $3 billion interest alone on the $40 billion total in those funds could finance a benefit extension. Some $8 billion sits virtually unused in a trust specially earmarked for thirteen additional weeks of benefits. Another $1.5 billion administrative fund could be tapped to relieve understaffed unemployment offices.

The most expedient way to release this money would be for Bush to declare unemployment benefits an emergency item as he did with the S&Ls and the gulf war, thus freeing them from restraints on government spending. Why aren't the Democrats demanding this? The issue is ultimately one of priorities.

The Democrats' response reflects more than political spinelessness, though; it confirms that the same bipartisan consensus that weakened the unemployment insurance system during the two previous administrations prevails to keep it weak. Rooted in business's drive for a cheaper and more docile work force, the dismantling of the system was one front in the assault on labor that accelerated in the late 1970s to discipline existing jobholders as well as channel the unemployed back to lower-paying jobs. With a restructured economy eliminating millions of jobs or moving them to low-wage areas, there was little rationale for stabilizing the work force during downturns, and every reason to do the opposite. Twenty-six weeks of benefits forces people to accept work at lower pay more quickly than sixty-five weeks. Labor Secretary Lynn Martin underscored the point at a Senate hearing in April when she said that the unemployment system was doing its job of "encouraging an early return to work."

It is clear that there will be little relief for the unemployed without mass public pressure. So where is organized labor? While the A.F.L.-C.I.O. lobbies for reform, it has squandered an opportunity by not making the jobs and unemployment issue a major plank in its Solidarity Day '91 mobilization scheduled for August 31. It is shortsighted not to see that now is the time to start a long-range campaign to fight on this issue as part of a broader effort to rebuild the labor movement. And if unemployment reform and full employment are to be put back on the national agenda, a grass-roots movement of the unemployed will also have to develop further. More than a million people will exhaust their unemployment benefits in the next few months, and long after this recession is declared over, people will continue to lose their jobs. Whether the monthly unemployment rates rise or fall, the need for fundamental reform will remain. Twenty-six weeks is not enough.

KEITH BROOKS AND MANNY NESS

Keith Brooks and Manny Ness are coordinators of the New York Unemployed Committee.

★

Father's Day Is Gone

Father's day is gone. It's over.
Dad was briefly in the clover—
Feeling wise, a valued leader
Who deserved that power weeder.
Cracking wry, a bit like Cos, he
Now reverts—it's back to Ozzie.

Calvin Trillin

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Matériel Boys: What Won the War?

The centerpiece of America's Centennial Exhibition was the 680-ton Corliss steam engine, the mere sight of which, newspapers reported, made women faint and moved strong men to tears. "Nothing could surpass the grace with which the giant does his work," the *Nation* correspondent, J.M. Hart, gasped from Philadelphia on May 18, 1876. "It is to me the highest embodiment of man's power, and I could stand by the hour watching it."

In fact, the *Nation* man was talking rot. My colleague Adam Goodheart, who's been studying the Centennial and the birth of consumer culture, says the mighty Corliss was remarkably inefficient for its size and did not represent any technological breakthrough.

What is it about machinery—these days they like to call it "high tech"—that causes *Nation*-types to go weak at the knees? Even arms company flacks sounded demure next to leftists proclaiming the *efficient* horrors of the "electronic battlefield" back in the Vietnam era, and the same is true today in the wake of the gulf war. From Alvin and Heidi Toffler writing in the *Los Angeles Times* for March 5 and 6, to Paul Walker and Eric Stambler in *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* for May, to Michael Klare in *The Nation* for June 3, the refrain is similar—the war with Iraq conducted between January 17 and February 28 marked a triumph for efficient technology, suggesting a new phase in military affairs.

There were differences in emphasis. The Tofflers, in two enormous Op-Ed pieces, spoke with the rhetoric of Herbert Spencer spliced into Defense Department handouts. In yet another chapter in the long tradition of American technological utopianism the Tofflers imagined new machines that are both magnificently violent and redemptive, atoning for the excesses of the twentieth century with a return to warfare that "minimizes 'wasteful' destruction."

In contrast to this balderdash the *Bulletin* and *Nation* authors dwelled on the novel powers of devastation recently displayed, citing at luxuriant length claims made by arms manufacturers and the Pentagon for cluster bombs, fuel-air explosives and other munitions. Even so, all authors were united by faith in the machine. Man barely entered the picture.

No achievement of technology was more hailed during and after the war than the Patriot missile. Many agreed with President Bush when he told the Raytheon workers on February 15, "For years we've heard that antimissile defenses won't work. The shooting down of a ballistic missile is impossible, like trying to hit a bullet with a bullet. Some people called it impossible; you called it your job. And they were wrong" etc. etc.

In the military celebrations in Washington and New York in early June pyrotechnic experts even mimed the downing of Scuds by Patriots. An accurate simulation would have led to heavy loss of life among the onlookers gazing heavenward, as "Patriot" fireworks plunged lethally into the throngs.

The Patriots performed very poorly, even though during the war the press accepted without question the claim that the missiles had intercepted forty-five out of forty-seven incoming Scuds. But on the admission of the Pentagon, from recent testimony in Congress (see, for example, weapons designer and military analyst Pierre Sprey's testimony to the House Armed Services Committee on April 22) and from information coming out of Israel, it now appears that 157 Patriots were fired at 51 Scuds within Patriot "coverage"—the numbers vary slightly. Few of those "successfully intercepted" Scud warheads were prevented from hitting either a structure or the ground and then exploding. Moreover numbers of Patriots, some fired at Scuds and some launched upon radar false alarms, came down and exploded, adding to the casualties and damage.

At one point Israeli sources were alleging that only one Scud warhead was destroyed in midair, which is an exaggeration but not a ludicrous one. Currently published figures show that Israeli casualties per Scud fired increased by 80 percent after the Patriots started "defending" Israel. The number of apartments damaged per Scud increased by 400 percent.

The hoopla about laser-guided bombs was equally hollow. There was nothing new about this technology, which was deployed in four earlier conflicts: Vietnam, Grenada, Libya and Panama. In the gulf the percent successes for laser-guided bombs seem to have been very poor, despite the video clips replayed interminably on TV. As Sprey pointed out in his testimony, on the evidence of General Schwarzkopf's briefing of January 30, twenty-four sorties were needed to get one hit on a bridge. Not long after the briefing an R.A.F. officer said that only one-third of the thirty-three bridges hit had actually been destroyed, so it took seventy-two attack sorties to destroy one bridge, indicating a success rate of rather less than 1.5 percent.

Of the 9,368 laser-guided bombs dropped in the war 5,467 were Mavericks, first deployed around 1970. In a report released on February 21 the Project on Government Procurement noted that pilots firing Mavericks in close air support of ground troops have difficulty distinguishing friend from foe. The pilot must find his target in a blurry infrared image on a small cockpit screen while flying 500 to 600 miles per hour. Pilots liken this to driving down an expressway while looking through a drinking straw. Under such conditions in the gulf, Mavericks killed seven U.S. soldiers, having mistaken their vehicles for those of the enemy.

Carolling the triumphs of advanced weaponry in the gulf is not mere vainglory, since arms manufacturers are battling for procurement funds from a diminishing military budget. Northrop, which recently lost out to Lockheed in a contest for a new Stealth fighter contract, announced soon after that it was manufacturing a Stealth missile, thus maintaining some 4,000 jobs in the beleaguered Los Angeles economy. But Lockheed's previous Stealth fighter, the F-117, was not particularly stealthy in the gulf. A wide variety of radars—French, Chinese and British—had no trouble tracking it, and no one seems to have been more convinced of this than the F-117 pilots.

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

How Near Is 'Near-Nuclear'?

"What made the gulf war so distinctive," Klare wrote in *The Nation*, " . . . was the widespread (and often experimental) use of a new breed of munitions designed to duplicate the destructive effects of tactical nuclear weapons. These munitions—fuel-air explosives, penetration bombs and wide-area cluster bombs—were dropped in great profusion to destroy fortifications, demolish underground bunkers, disable tanks and vehicles, and kill or maim military personnel."

Klare's argument, similar to one expressed by Mary Kaldor and others, is that NATO powers had favored the development of these "near-nuclear" weapons as a way to resolve the dilemma posed by the clashing imperatives of cost—nukes are supposedly cheap in terms of what could be called destructive productivity—and of political pressure to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons. The gulf war offered a chance to deploy this new arsenal.

Walker, Stambler and Klare all insist that with some 87,500 tons of bombs dropped by the United States on the Iraqis, the war was in Klare's term the most "firepower-intensive conflict since World War II." That figure is arrived at by dividing the tonnage of dropped explosives by the war's duration, also by a vague calculus of deaths per ton of explosive dropped. But it doesn't really mean much, particularly since no one has any clear idea of how many Iraqis were killed by bombs and missiles. Among civilians the figure may well have been around 4,500, and though Schwarzkopf said 100,000 Iraqi soldiers may have died, this could be a considerable overestimate. The number of wounded Iraqi soldiers does not suggest losses of this magnitude. Prisoners of war from two Republican Guard divisions reported 100 and 1,000 casualties respectively. The rate of desertion was also high, so there is no hope of ever resolving the matter with any pretense to accuracy.

As against the estimated 110,000 tons of bombs dropped by all "coalition" forces in the gulf war, the Allies dropped 3 million tons of bombs in World War II, and U.S. forces dropped 4.6 million tons on Vietnam. In fact the tonnage in the gulf war was lower than it would have been if sorties using "smart" bombs had used standard ones instead, precisely because fighters carrying "smart" bombs release only an eighth of the warhead tonnage of "iron," or dumb, bombs. The refurbished B-52s, meanwhile, are so crammed with retrofitted electronics that they carry half the explosive payload of the Vietnam-era B-52s. Furthermore the weaponry rolled forth by Walker, Stambler and Klare is less innovative than they pretend.

For example, the Multiple-Launch Rocket System (M.L.R.S.) is invoked by the trio as having "awesome" effectiveness, covering up to "six football fields" (an image common to both articles) with 7,700 grenade-like "submunitions." The basic idea of the M.L.R.S.—a container hurling rockets—goes back to World War II, to the Soviet Katyusha in fact. It is very expensive and very inaccurate. The Army Tactical Missile System (ATACM), with slightly longer range, has similar failings and lack of novelty. Lack of novelty is also a feature of the aircraft-fired SLAM missile, whose Walleye video data link dates back to the Vietnam era, though it is mounted on a different air frame. Only seven were fired in the gulf war.

Walker, Stambler and Klare reserve their most morbid excitement for cluster bombs and fuel-air explosives. "Near-nuclear" is certainly a misnomer for cluster bombs, which have a devastating impact on infantry and civilians in the open but are effective only against such exposed troops and light-skinned vehicles. They are nearly useless against tanks and dug-in troops. In Vietnam, U.S. commanders forbade the use of cluster bombs in close support of troops, since many of them "dudded," were retrieved by the enemy from a roll trench dug for that purpose, re-fused and then delivered back by hand.

The fuel-air explosive has had a far more sensational existence in myth and propaganda than in actual war. In the fall of 1990 the Pentagon was touting it to the press as a new terror weapon, "near-nuclear" in potential, possessed not by the United States but by the Iraqis. It was in fact an old weapon, used in the gulf by the United States.

Klare and the others cite it as having "awesome potential," with a vapor cloud ignited over a large area, releasing a blast of immense force. The technology is fairly simple, though subject to frequent glitches. What is essentially a propane bottle is broken; gas spreads and is then ignited. Conventional bombs have a short, high-pressure explosive pulse. Nuclear bombs have long-duration pressure pulses. Like nukes, fuel-air explosives are unconfined explosives with long pulses, but the pressure is low, and if you are in a bunker or an armored vehicle, the pressure coming through the vision slits will be insufficient to collapse your lungs. Even a sandbag bunker will protect you.

Fuel-air explosives, evaluated back in the McNamara days of the late 1960s, were designed to kill people first in bunkers and then in foxholes and behind cover. In this second function they had an effectiveness equivalent to high-explosive bombs, with no radical change in capability. They failed to incapacitate people in bunkers.

The "Daisy Cutter," or BLU-82/B, a 15,000-pound bomb classified by Klare as the "most potent" of the fuel-air explosives, is no such thing but rather a giant bomb filled with conventional high explosives. It can be delivered only by specially fitted C-130s (large, slow transports), making it pretty much useless against militarily defended targets. Its purpose has nothing to do with unleashing "near-nuclear" force, as opposed to clearing covered areas for helicopter landings.

It was General Schwarzkopf who said that if the U.S.-led coalition and the Iraqis had exchanged weapons the results would have been the same. Indeed, the Iraqis had many similar sorts of weapons. But aside from innovative tactics, what the U.S.-led coalition had was the most potent weapon of all, the extraordinary common sense and political courage of the Iraqi fighting man, who refused to fight. The left, mesmerizing itself with Defense Department handouts and arms company brochures, is forgetting—as Schwarzkopf did not—the maxim of Napoleon that in war the physical balance of forces is only 25 percent of the story; the rest concerns "des affaires morales"—i.e., nonmaterial factors.

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BELTWAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN

■ Reach Out and Lobby Someone

Even for a Congress where ferocious special-interest lobbying is the norm, the scene was unusual. As the Senate debated and voted on the Telecommunications Equipment Research and Manufacturing Competition Act, a dozen or so lobbyists from the seven regional phone companies—the Baby Bells—huddled just yards away from the Senate floor. Each held a cellular telephone, by which to relay every suggested change in the legislation to headquarters. There teams of lawyers and analysts scoured the proposed language and determined whether the bill would bring their companies new profits. Standing alone against this high-tech horde was a phoneless Gene Kimmelman, legislative director for the Consumer Federation of America. His modest goal was to fight a bill that would enhance monopolies and probably lead to higher phone rates.

The telecommunications measure is one of a certain breed of laws: dull, seemingly arcane legislation that could have tremendous impact on a substantial group of Americans, those who pay phone bills. Its centerpiece is a provision allowing the Baby Bells to manufacture equipment for their own local telephone networks. Under the terms of the A.T.&T. breakup, the regional phone companies were prohibited from manufacturing the equipment used in their networks. The reason was simple. The Baby Bells provide a regulated monopoly service and are allowed to charge rates that cover their costs and include a profit. If permitted to make equipment, they would have a strong incentive to buy from themselves at inflated prices and pass the costs on in higher rates. That is what the old A.T.&T. monopoly did.

Not surprisingly, the regional phone companies have gone the distance on this bill. They hit numerous Senate offices and had a relentless champion in Commerce Committee chair Ernest Hollings, who sponsored the bill. Lobbying assistance came from Ralph Everett, who used to be chief counsel for the committee, and Stephen Cannon, a former Republican counsel for the Judiciary Committee and an ex-deputy assistant attorney general in the antitrust division. The Consumer Federation of America had a natural ally in A.T.&T., which now manufactures much of the equipment used by the Baby Bells. But, according to Senate aides, A.T.&T. ran a surprisingly inept campaign. For example, it set up its command post in a hotel that does not receive the cable channel broadcasting the Senate proceedings. It did not press the consumer angle. And it was outgunned: Senators who make such calculations know that the Baby Bells are good for seven separate campaign donations; A.T.&T. can offer only one. Kimmelman and A.T.&T. could not beat back the regional companies. Hollings collected seventy-one votes against twenty-four. Now the salivating babies turn their juggernaut toward the House.

■ Cruelty in Context

On the same day that Kuwaiti soldiers deported 115 people, twenty of them children, and dumped them into mine-laden Iraqi territory with no food or water, the House subcommittee on human rights and the subcommittee on the Middle East held a joint hearing regarding Kuwait and was forced to listen to some nonsense from Saif Abbas Abdulla and Representative Henry Hyde. Abdulla, a professor at Kuwait University, is not a Kuwaiti government official, but he sounded the Emir's line. A prominent obstacle to the protection of life and property of Kuwaiti citizens and residents, he claimed, is the international human rights community: "In reality, the reports by these watchful eyes, in my opinion, act as a hindrance to the achievement" of the Kuwaiti government's goals of providing food, water and medicine; repatriating Kuwaitis forcibly removed by Iraqi troops; establishing law and order; cleaning up the environment; and setting dates for elections. Residents and citizens of Kuwait, he asserted, would be better off if their country was left alone. The few lawmakers present shook their heads in disbelief. Soon afterward, in strolled Hyde to condemn Kuwaiti human rights abuses but also to remind his colleagues that they must view these actions "in context." After all, there had been a war and people are still upset. "There's a little hubris in demanding that they adhere to our standards," he observed. "They didn't grow up in a democracy. They didn't read Abraham Lincoln." Legislators must keep in mind, Hyde added, that "in some places you don't get arrested and tortured, you get shot and killed." That ought to satisfy the deportees and the relatives of those Kuwaiti residents tortured, killed and buried in mass graves.

■ 'October Surprise': The G.O.P. Strikes Back

When the House considered the 1992 budget for the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, last month, minority whip Newt Gingrich took the podium to support a Republican amendment that would slash the G.A.O.'s funding by nearly one-quarter. What most disturbed him was that G.A.O. investigators, responding to a request from a Democratic member, had made inquiries regarding allegations that the Reagan campaign in 1980 struck a secret deal with Iranian representatives to delay the release of the hostages until after the election. Placing the G.A.O. on this case, Gingrich complained, was the equivalent of turning it into "a branch" of the Democratic Party. Gingrich's attitude is particularly parochial when compared with that of Moorhead Kennedy, one of eight former hostages who have called for a Congressional inquiry. Kennedy, a Republican who headed the economic section of the U.S. Embassy in Teheran, says that the "October surprise" charges are "a taint on the honor of the party" and for that reason Republicans should take the lead in seeking the truth.

Gingrich and the Republican leadership are not as civic-minded. Although their effort to vitiate the G.A.O. failed on a largely party-line vote, it was not without some success. A House aide working on a preliminary inquiry—there's still no official probe—reports that G.A.O. staff members are now "scared to death" to participate in an investigation.

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WATCHING RIGHTS.

ARYEH NEIER

In 1980 Mauritania abolished slavery—for the third time. The following year the Anti-Slavery Society, a venerable London-based group, estimated that the country still held at least 100,000 slaves. Slavery persists today, though it is only possible to guess at the numbers. For its part Mauritania does not acknowledge that slavery is practiced, referring only to Haratines, or freed slaves and their descendants.

The slaves, and the Haratines, are black. Together with segments of the black population that have never been enslaved they almost certainly make up the majority of the population; the actual ethnic breakdown is not known, as the government has not disclosed census results. In any event, the blacks of Mauritania are not a cohesive population, since most Haratines (also known as black Moors or black Maurs) identify with their former masters, politically and culturally.

Mauritania is dominated by Beydanes, literally "white men," of Arab/Berber descent. Since independence in 1960, an effort to "Arabize" the country has been under way. Arabic has been declared the official language, and discrimination in education, employment and daily life has been pervasive. Black Mauritanians who have protested this form of apartheid have been subjected to virtually every imaginable form of human rights abuse: mass expulsions, sweep arrests, extreme torture, killings and disappearances.

One protest took place in September 1986. Thirty black intellectuals issued "The Manifesto of the Oppressed Black Mauritanian." Twenty-one of them were arrested, four were sentenced to six-month prison terms and the other seventeen were sentenced to four- and five-year terms. The convictions were based largely on statements extracted from them during incommunicado detention when, according to several defendants, they were tortured. One woman defendant said she had been raped by a senior police official. Two died in prison in 1988. When blacks in various parts of Mauritania demonstrated against the trials, more than 100 were arrested and at least forty were sentenced to prison terms ranging from eight months to five years.

A particularly nasty phase of the persecution of the black population began last November. The Mauritanian government claimed that a coup attempt was being organized, backed by neighboring Senegal. Blacks in the armed forces, the police and the civil service were rounded up and imprisoned, supposedly to be tried for treason. The U.S. State Department's most recent annual report on human rights worldwide put the number between 1,000 and 2,000; Amnesty International said the number was 3,000. Other estimates run even higher.

No trials were held. In March an amnesty was declared and the detainees were freed. That is, those who had survived were freed. Two representatives of Africa Watch, Rakiya Omaar and Janet Fleischman, who traveled earlier this year to the banks of the Senegal River along the border with Mauritania to interview refugees, have compiled a "preliminary list" of 173 detainees who died in custody—either from the effects of torture or because they were summarily executed. My Africa Watch colleagues believe that the actual number of those who died in detention might be significantly higher, but they were unable to obtain information.

The persecution of the black population in Mauritania—which has driven more than 80,000 to refuge in Senegal and more than 10,000 to Mali—has attracted little international attention. In a way, that is not surprising. Even many well-informed Americans would have difficulty locating Mauritania on the map. The handful of journalists who cover black Africa for the major media are stretched to the breaking point covering such momentous events as the peace agreement in Angola, the rebel victory in Ethiopia, the disintegration of Liberia and Somalia, the continuing wars in Sudan and Mozambique, the political ferment in Kenya and Zambia and the democratization taking place to varying degrees in several West African countries. Also, the U.S. government is not an important actor in Mauritania. Economic aid has been negligible, and given Mauritania's alignment with Iraq in the Persian Gulf conflict, there seems no prospect that our government will soon provide more support.

If newsworthiness here is commensurate with the involvement of the United States, Mauritania is not much of a story. Yet if a comparable number of blacks protesting racial persecution had died in custody from the effects of torture in South Africa in a similar period, it would have been headline news worldwide. One source of denunciations would have been the Organization of African Unity. Mauritania is itself a member of the O.A.U., however, and benefits from the traditional reluctance of international bodies to interfere in what are considered the internal affairs of member states. After all, many nations that are members of the O.A.U. would not be eager to subject their own treatment of citizens to international scrutiny and criticism.

One might also have expected France to denounce what is going on in Mauritania. The French distribute far more economic aid in Africa than the United States, and France remains an important force in the affairs of its former colonies. Although France's role is creditable, publicly it has kept silent. Senior French officials have visited Mauritania in recent months, and it seems likely that their intervention was responsible for the amnesty that took place in March. Also, the French government has been generous in providing asylum to Mauritanian refugees and has attempted to be a peacemaker between Senegal and Mauritania. Perhaps these actions are most significant in explaining its public silence: Governments engaged in mediation efforts usually consider public démarches to be counterproductive.

So almost everyone has a reason to neglect Mauritania, or to remain discreet about what is going on. Some reasons are good; others are not so good. If there is anything that is known about cruelties such as those practiced by Mauritania against its black population, it is that they cannot stand the light of day. Exposure and denunciation are required to curb such abuses. If there are exceptions to this rule, they do not come to mind.

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ARTICLES.

BORN TO LOSE

The Prejudice Against Men

PETER MARIN

For the past several years advocates for the homeless have sought public support and sympathy by drawing attention to the large number of homeless families on our streets. That is an understandable tactic. Americans usually respond to social issues on the basis of sympathy for "innocent" victims—those whose blamelessness touches our hearts and whom we deem unable to care for themselves. Families, and especially children, obviously fill the bill.

But the fact remains, despite the claims of advocates, that the problem of chronic homelessness is essentially a problem of *single adult men*. Far more single adults than families, and far more men than women, end up homeless on our streets. Until we understand how and why that happens, nothing we do about homelessness will have much of an impact.

Most figures pertaining to the homeless come from limited studies or educated guesses that tend, when examined, to dissolve in one's hand. The most convincing figures I know can be found in James Wright's book *Address Unknown: The Homeless in America*. According to Wright's data, out of every 1,000 homeless people in America, 120 or so will be adults with children, another hundred will be children and the rest will be single adults. Out of that total, 156 will be single women and 580 will be single men. Now break that down into percentages. Out of all single homeless adults, 78 percent are men; out of all homeless adults, more than 64 percent are single men; and out of all homeless people—adults or children—58 percent are single men.

But even those figures do not give the full story. Our federal welfare system has been designed, primarily, to aid women with children or whole families. That means that most of the families and children on the streets have either fallen through the cracks of the welfare system or have not yet entered it. They will, in the end, have access to enough aid to get them off the streets and into some form of shelter, while most men will be left permanently on their own.

I do not mean to diminish here the suffering of families or children, nor to suggest that welfare provides much more than the meanest alternative to homelessness. It is a form of indentured pauperism so grim it shames the nation. But it does in fact eventually get most families off the streets, and that leaves behind, as the chronically homeless, single adults, of whom four-fifths are men. Seen that way, homelessness emerges as a problem involving what happens to men without money, or men in trouble.

Why do so many more men than women end up on the streets? Let me begin with the simplest answers.

First, life on the streets, as dangerous as it is for men, is even more dangerous for women, who are far more vulnerable. While many men in trouble drift almost naturally onto the streets, women do almost anything to avoid it.

Second, there are far better private and public shelters and services available to women.

Third, women are accustomed to asking for help while men are not; women therefore make better use of available resources.

Fourth, poor families *in extremis* seem to practice a form of informal triage. Young men are released into the streets more readily, while young women are kept at home even in the worst circumstances.

Fifth, there are cultural and perhaps even genetic factors at work. There is some evidence that men—especially in adolescence—are more aggressive and openly rebellious than women and therefore harder to socialize. Or it may simply be that men are allowed to live out the impulses women are taught to suppress, and that they therefore end up more often in marginal roles.

More important, still, may be the question of work. Historically, the kinds of work associated with transient or marginal life have been reserved for men. They brought in crops, worked on ships and docks, built roads and railroads, logged and mined. Such labor granted them a place in the economy while allowing them to remain on society's edges—an option rarely available to women save through prostitution.

And society has always seemed, by design, to produce the men who did such work. Obviously, poverty and joblessness forced men into marginality. But there was more to it than that. Schools produced failures, dropouts and rebels; family life and its cruelties produced runaways and throwaways; wars rendered men incapable of settled or domestic life; small-town boredom and provinciality led them to look elsewhere for larger worlds.

Now, of course, the work such men did is gone. But like a mad engine that cannot be shut down, society goes right on producing them. Its institutions function as they always did: The schools hum, the families implode or collapse, the wars churn out their victims. But what is there for them to do? The low-paying service-sector jobs that have replaced manual labor in the economy go mainly to women or high school kids, not the men who once did the nation's roughest work.

Remember, too, in terms of work, that women, especially when young, have one final option denied to men. They can take on the "labor" of being wives and companions to men or of bearing children, and in return they will often be supported or "taken care of" by someone else. Yes, I know: Such roles can often constitute a form of oppression, especially when assumed out of necessity. But nonetheless, the possibility

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Peter Marin, an essayist and novelist who has been researching and writing about homelessness for the past three years, currently has a grant from the Alicia Patterson Foundation. A version of this article is being simultaneously published in the A.P.F. Reporter.

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is there. It is permissible (as well as often necessary) for women to become financially, if precariously, dependent on others, while such dependence is more or less forbidden to men.

Finally, there is the federal welfare system. I do not think most Americans understand how the system works, or how for decades it has actually sent men into the streets, creating at least some male homelessness while aiding women and children. Let me explain. There are two main programs that provide care for Americans in trouble. One is Social Security Disability Insurance. It goes to men or women who are unable, because of physical or mental problems, to work or take care of themselves. The other is Aid to Families with Dependent Children (A.F.D.C.). It is what we ordinarily call "welfare." With its roots early in this century, it was established more or less in its present form during the Depression. Refined and expanded again in the 1960s, A.F.D.C. had always been a program meant mainly for women and children and limited to households headed by women. As long as an adult man remained in the household as mate, companion or father, *no aid was forthcoming*. Changes have recently been made in the system, and men may remain in the household if they have a work history satisfying certain federal guidelines. But in poor areas and for certain ethnic groups, where unemployment runs high and few men have a qualifying work history, these changes have not yet had much of an impact and men remain functionally outside the welfare system.

When it comes to single and "able-bodied," or employable, adults, there is no federal aid whatsoever. Individual states and localities sometimes provide their own aid through "general assistance" and "relief." But this is usually granted only on a temporary basis or in emergencies. And in those few places where it is available for longer periods to large numbers of single adults—California, for instance, or New York—it is often so grudging, so ringed round with capricious requirements and red tape, that it is of little use to those in need.

This combination of approaches not only systematically denies men aid as family members or single adults. It means that the aid given to women has sometimes actually deprived men of homes, even as it has provided for women and children. Given the choice between receiving aid for themselves and their children and living with men, what do you think most women do? The regulations as they stand actually force men to compete with the state for women; as a woman in New Orleans once told me: "Welfare changes even love. If a man can't make more at a job than I get from welfare, I ain't even gonna look at him. I can't afford it."

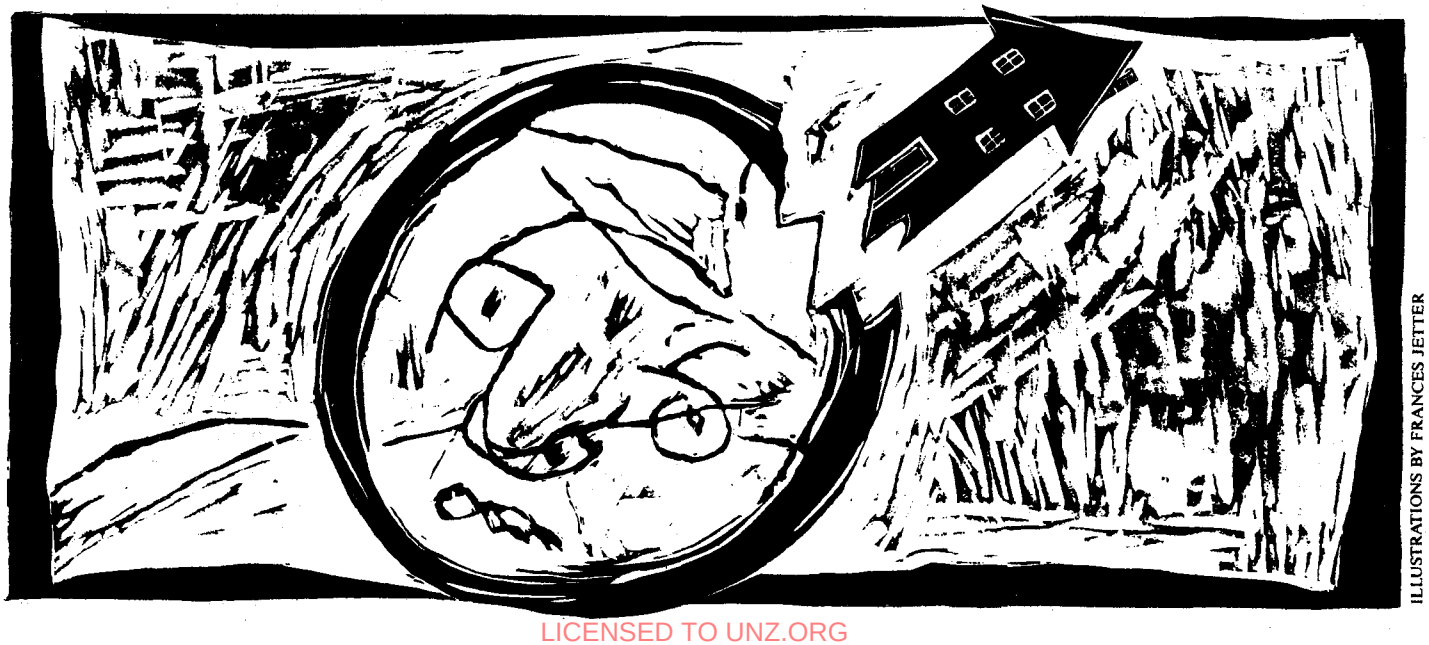
Everywhere in America poor men have been forced to become ghost-lovers and ghost-fathers, one step ahead of welfare workers ready to disqualify families for having a man around. In many ghettos throughout the country you find women and children in their deteriorating welfare apartments, and their male companions and fathers in even worse conditions: homeless in gutted apartments and abandoned cars, denied even the minimal help granted the opposite sex.

Is it surprising, in this context, that many African-Americans see welfare as an extension of slavery that destroys families, isolates women and humiliates men according to white bureaucratic whim? Or is it accidental that in poor communities family structure has collapsed and more and more children are born outside marriage at precisely the same time that disfranchised men are flooding the streets? Welfare is not the only influence at work in all of this, of course. But before judging men and their failures and difficulties, one must understand that their social roles are in no way supported or made easier by the social policies that in small ways make female roles sustainable.

Is this merely an accidental glitch in the system, something that has happened unnoticed? Or does it merely have something to do with a sort of lifeboat ethic, where our scarce resources for helping people are applied according to the ethics of a sinking ship—women and children first, men into the sea?

I do not think so. Something else is at work: deep-seated prejudices and attitudes toward men that are so pervasive, so pandemic, that we have ceased to notice or examine them.

To put it simply: Men are neither supposed nor allowed to be dependent. They are expected to take care of both others *and* themselves. And when they cannot do it, or "will not"



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do it, the built-in assumption at the heart of the culture is that they are *less than men* and therefore unworthy of help. An irony asserts itself: Simply by being in need of help, men forfeit the right to it.

Think here of how we say "helpless as a woman." This demeans women. But it also does violence to men. It implies that a man cannot be helpless and still be a man, or that helplessness is not a male attribute, or that a woman can be helpless through no fault of her own, but that if a man is helpless it is or must be his own fault.

Try something here. Imagine walking down a street and passing a group of homeless women. Do we not spontaneously see them as victims and wonder what has befallen them, how destiny has injured them? Do we not see them as unfortunate and deserving of help and *want* to help them?

At the heart of their troubles is a helplessness they cannot overcome on their own.

Now imagine a group of homeless men. Is our reaction the same? Is it as sympathetic? Or is it subtly different? Do we have the very same impulse to help and protect? Or do we not wonder, instead of what befell them, how they have got themselves where they are?

And remember, too, our fear. When most of us see homeless or idle men we sense or imagine danger; they make us afraid, as if, being beyond the pale, they are also beyond all social control—and therefore people to be avoided and suppressed rather than helped.

Here too work plays a crucial role. In his memoirs Hamlin Garland describes the transient farm workers who passed through the countryside each year at harvest time. In good years, when there were crops to bring in, they were tolerated: fed, housed and hired. But when the crops were bad and men weren't needed, then they were forced to stay outside of town or pass on unaided, having become merely threats to peace and order, barbarians at the gates.

The same attitude is with us still. When men work (or when they go to war—work's most brutal form), we grant them a right to exist. But when work is scarce, or when men are of little economic use, then they become in our eyes not only superfluous but a danger. We feel compelled to exile them from our midst, banish them from view, drive them away to shift for themselves in more or less the same way that our Puritan forebears, in their shining city on its hill, treated sinners and rebels.

One wonders just how far back such attitudes go. One thinks of the Bible and the myth of the Garden and the first disobedience, when women were cursed with childbirth and men with the sorrows of labor—destinies still, as if by intention, maintained by our welfare system and private attitudes.

And one thinks too of the Victorian era, when the idealized vision of women and children had its modern beginnings. They were set outside the industrial nexus and freed from heavy labor while being rendered more than ever dependent on and subservient to men. It was a process that obviously diminished women, but it had a parallel effect on men. It defined them as laborers and little else, especially if they came from the lower classes. The yoke of labor lifted from the shoulders of women settled even more heavily on the backs of certain men, confining them in roles as narrow and as oppressive as those to which women were assigned.

We are so used to thinking of ours as a male-dominated society that we tend to lose track of the ways in which some men are as oppressed, or perhaps even more oppressed, than most women. But race and class, as well as gender, play roles in oppression. And while it is true, in general, that men dominate society and women, in practice it is only *certain* men who are dominant; others, usually those from the working class and often darker skinned (at least 50 percent of homeless men are black or Latino), suffer endlessly from forms of isolation and contempt that often exceed what many women experience.

The irony at work in all of this is that what you often find among homeless men, and what seems at the heart of their troubles, is precisely what our cultural myths deny them: a helplessness they cannot overcome on their own. You find vulnerability, a sense of injury and betrayal and, in their isolation, a despair equal to what we accept without question in women.

Often this goes unadmitted. Even when in deep trouble men understand, sometimes unconsciously, that they are not to complain or ask for help. I remember several men I knew in the local hobo jungle. Most of them were vets. They had constructed a tiny village of half-caves and shelters among the trees and brush, and when stove smoke filled the clearing and they stood bare to the waist, knives at their hips, you would swear you were in an army jungle camp. They drank throughout the day, and at dusk there always came a moment when they wandered off individually to sit staring out at the mountains or sea. And you could see on their faces at such moments, if you caught them unawares, a particular and unforgettable look: pensive, troubled, somehow innocent—the look of lost children or abandoned men.

I have seen the same look multiplied hundreds of times on winter nights in huge shelters in great cities, where a thousand men at a time will sometimes gather, each encapsulated in solitude on a bare cot, coughing and turning or sometimes crying all night, lost in nightmares as terrible as a child's or as life on the street. In the mornings they returned to their masked public personas, to the styles of behavior and appearance that often frightened passers-by. But while they slept you could see past all that, and you found yourself thinking: These are still, even grown, *somebody's* children, and many fare no better on their own, as adults, than they would have as children.

I remember, too, a young man in my town who was always in trouble for beating up older drunken men. No one understood his brutality until he explained it one day to a woman he trusted: "When I was a kid my daddy ran off and my mother's drunken brothers disciplined me. Whenever I made a mistake they punished me by slicing my legs with a straight razor." And he pulled up his pant-legs to reveal on each shin

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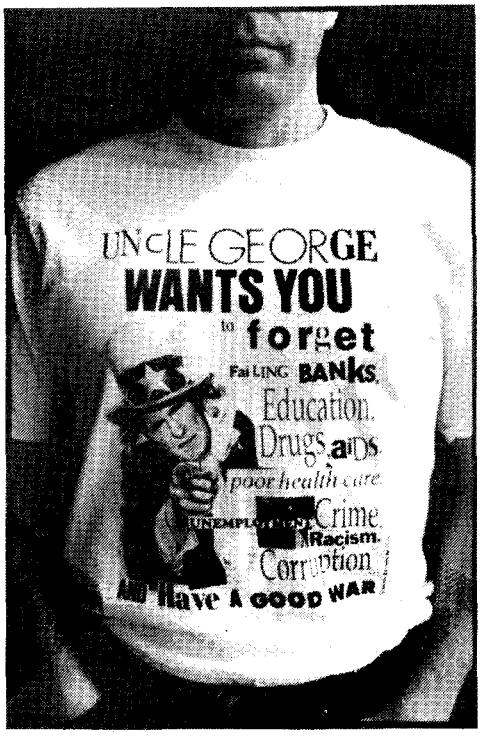

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a ladder of scars marking each childhood error or flaw.

This can stand for countless stories I've heard. The feeling you get, over and over, is that most men on the street have been "orphaned" in some way, deprived somewhere along the line of the kinds of connection, support and sustenance that enable people to find and keep places in the social order. Of course economics plays a part in this—I do not mean to suggest it does not. But more often than not, something else is also at work, something that cuts close to the bone of social and psychological as well as economic issues: the dissolution of family structures and the vitiation of community; subtle and overt forms of discrimination and racism; and institutions—schools, for instance—that harm or marginalize almost as many people as they help.

For decades now, sociologists have called our attention to rents in our private social fabric as well as our public "safety nets," and to the victims they produce: abused kids, battered women, isolated adults, alcoholics, addicts. Why, I wonder, is it so hard to see homeless men in this context? Why is it so hard to understand that the machinery of our institutions can injure men as permanently as it does women? We know, for instance, that both male and female children are permanently injured by familial abuse and violence and "normal" cruelties of family life. Why, then, do we find it hard to see that grown men, as well as women, can be crippled by childhood, or that they often end up on the edges of society, unable to play expected roles in a world that has betrayed them?

And do not forget here the greatest violence done to men, the tyrannous demand made upon them when young by older and more powerful males: that they kill and die in war. We take that demand for granted in our society and for some reason fail to see it as a form of oppression. But why? Long before the war in Vietnam had crowded our streets with vets—as far back as the Civil War—the male victims of organized state violence wandered across America unable to find or make places in the social world. The fact is that many men never fully recover from the damage done by war, having seen too much of death to ever again do much with life.

Nor is war the only form in which death and disaster have altered the lives of troubled men. They appear repeatedly in the stories men tell. Listening to these tales one thinks of Oedipus and Lear, of tragedy in its classical sense, of the furies and fates that the Greeks believed stalk all human lives and that are still at work among us, no matter how much we deny them.

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Gene, a homeless man I know, was conceived when his mother slept with his father's best friend. Neither of his parents wanted him, so he was raised reluctantly by his mother's parents, who saw him only as the living evidence of her disgrace. As an adult he married and divorced twice, had two children he rarely saw later in life, and spent two years in jail for beating nearly to death a friend he found in bed with his second wife. When I first met him he was living in a cave he had dug by hand out of a hillside, and he spent the money he earned on dope or his friends. But then he met a woman on the streets and they moved together to a cheap hotel. He got her pregnant; they planned to marry; but then they argued and she ran off and either had an abortion or spontaneously miscarried—it was never clear which. When Gene heard about it he took to his bed for days and would not sleep, eat or speak. When I later asked him why, he said: "I couldn't stand it. I wanted to die. I was the baby she killed. It was happening to me all over again, that bad stuff back when I was a kid."

Homeless men feel a sense of betrayal at society's refusal to recognize their needs.

Not everything you hear on the street is so dramatic. There are a thousand quiet and gradual ways American lives can fall apart or come to nothing. Often it is simply "normal" life that proves too much for some men. Some have merely failed at or fled their assigned roles: worker, husband, father. Others lacked whatever it takes to please a boss or a woman or else decided it wasn't worth the trouble to learn how to do it. Not all of them are "good" men. Some have brutalized women or left families in the lurch or fled lives in which the responsibility and stress were more than they could handle. "Couldn't hack it," they'll say with a shrug, or "I had to get out." And others have been so cruel to women or proved so unreliable or sometimes so unsuccessful that women fled them, leaving notes on the table or refrigerator such as the one a man in Seattle once repeated to me: "Gone. Took the kids. So long."

Are such men irresponsible? Perhaps. But in working with homeless men over the years, I've seen how many of them are genuinely unable to handle the stress others can tolerate. Many manage, for instance, to steer clear of alcohol or drugs for a certain period of time and then return to them automatically as soon as they are subject again to the kinds of stress they once fled. It is as if their defenses and even their skins are so much thinner than those of the rest of us that they give way as soon as trouble or too much responsibility appears.

The fact is that most such men seem to have tried to make a go of things, and many are willing to try again. But if others have given up and said, inside, *the hell with it* or *fuck it*, is that really astonishing? The curious world we've compounded in America of equal parts of freedom and isolation and individualism and demands for obedience and submission is a strange and wearing mix, and no one can be startled at the

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number of victims or recalcitrants it produces or at those who can't succeed at it.

Finally, I must add one more thing. Whatever particular griefs men may have experienced on their way to homelessness, there is one final and crippling sorrow all of them share: a sense of betrayal at society's refusal to recognize their needs. Most of us—men and women—grow up expecting that when things go terribly wrong someone, from somewhere, will step forward to help us. That this does not happen, and that all watch from the shore as each of us, in isolation, struggles to swim and then begins to sink, is perhaps the most terrible discovery that anyone in any society can make. When troubled men make that discovery, as all homeless men do sooner or later, then hope vanishes completely; despair rings them round; they have become what they need not have become: the homeless men we see everywhere around us.

What can be done about this? What will set it right? One can talk, of course, about confronting the root causes of marginalization: the failure of families, schools and communities; the stupidities of war, racism and discrimination; social and economic injustice; the disappearance of generosity and reciprocity among us. But what good will that do? America is what it is; culture has a tenacity of its own; and though it is easy to call for major kinds of renewal, nothing of the sort is likely to occur.

That leaves us with ameliorative and practical measures, and it will do no harm to mention them, though they too are not likely to be tried: a further reformation of the welfare system; the federalization of assistance to single adults; increases in the amount and duration of unemployment insurance; further raises in the minimum wage; expanded benefits for vets; detox centers and vocational education for those who want them; the construction of the kinds of low-cost hotels and boarding houses where men in trouble once stayed.

And remember that back in the Depression when the welfare system was established, it was paralleled by programs providing work for men: the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration. The idea seems to have been welfare for women, work for men. We still have the welfare for women, but where is the work for those men, or women, who want it? Why no one is currently lobbying for contemporary forms of those old programs remains a mystery. Given the deterioration of the American infrastructure—roads, bridges, public buildings—such programs would make sense from any point of view.

But beyond all this, and behind and beneath it, there remains the problem with which we began: the prejudices at work in society that prevent even the attempt to provide solutions. Suggestions such as those I have made will remain merely utopian notions without an examination and renovation of our attitudes toward men. During the past several decades we have slowly, laboriously, begun to confront our prejudices and oppressive practices in relation to women. Unless we now undertake the same kind of project in relation to men in general and homeless men in particular, nothing whatever is going to change. That's as sure as death and taxes and the endless, hidden sorrows of men. □

LESSONS OF A BY-ELECTION

A Democrat Wins! (Barely)

ANN HARRISON

Can a Michael Dukakis loyalist and former chair of the State Senate Taxation Committee win a Congressional race in Massachusetts? He can if he is Democrat John Olver and the National Abortion Rights Action League launches a $130,000 ad campaign against his opponent.

Olver's victory over anti-choice Republican Steven Pierce in the June 4 Massachusetts 1st Congressional District special election to fill the vacancy left by the death of Representative Silvio Conte demonstrated that reproductive freedom is still the one issue that rallies progressive voters. Their concerns about access to legal abortion gained momentum when, twelve days before the election, the Supreme Court upheld a federal regulation banning federally funded family planning clinics from discussing abortion as an option. The ruling sent a clear message to pro-choice voters that they could not rely on federal courts to protect their rights, making the election of a pro-choice representative an urgent mission.

Pierce, who might have learned to appreciate the pro-choice voting bloc when he lost a gubernatorial bid last year to pro-choice Republican William Weld, was betting that he could cast Olver as "Dr. Taxes" and hold him personally responsible for wrecking the Massachusetts economy. In a district where unemployment stands at 10 percent, that message almost gave Pierce the race. Olver squeaked by with a margin of 1.4 percent—hardly a stunning victory when you consider that registered Democrats outnumber registered Republicans in the western Massachusetts district by three to one.

Olver's victory, which puts the district in Democratic hands for the first time in this century, shows that party candidates have few new answers to the tax-and-spend charge that plagued Dukakis during the 1988 presidential race. Olver spent most of the campaign trying to distance himself from Pierce's claim that he was just a taller Dukakis, but voters received little reassurance that they had not just been handed another passionless technocrat by a party that has abandoned its progressive vision.

On the surface, Olver's nine terms as a state senator produced a voting record that made him attractive to liberals as a lesser evil. He spent years voting to support expenditures for education, environmental programs and social services, and he gained a reputation as a plodding but well-intentioned public servant. In 1990 he led the Tax Equity Alliance for Massachusetts (TEAM) in fighting a $2 billion tax rollback ballot

Ann Harrison, who covered the Massachusetts 1st Congressional District special election for the National Public Radio affiliate WFCR-FM in Amherst, is a member of the National Writers Union.

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initiative that would have decimated funding for public schools and other services. Even as the economy began to sour, Massachusetts taxpayers declared themselves "mad but not crazy" and voted down the initiative in favor of a tax on business services [see Ann Withorn, "Taxation for the General Good," April 23, 1990].

By the time Olver was running for Congress seven months later, however, the state was facing a $2-to-3-billion deficit, Weld had repealed the business tax and the Democratic-controlled legislature was helping the Governor dismantle the most cherished public programs of the past decade. Olver still managed to cash in his political markers, lining up the support of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., the Teamsters, the League of Conservation Voters, the Massachusetts Teachers Association and coalitions of social service workers. But when Pierce suggested early in the race that Olver treated the state treasury like an automated teller machine with an unlimited balance, it was clear that the Democrats were again on the defensive.

Massachusetts taxpayers have a proud history of resentment, reaching all the way back to the original 1773 tax revolt in Boston Harbor [see "Come Back, Shays," June 24]. In the eleven communities that had an override of property-tax caps or related issues as ballot questions in the Congressional race, Pierce eventually won all eight of those that rejected the notion in part or in total. Pierce tapped into this simmering anti-tax sentiment by focusing the federal election on Statehouse politics. As G.O.P. leader in the Massachusetts House, Pierce received national attention during the 1988 presidential campaign as top banana in the local contingent of Dukakis-bashers. Pierce branded Olver as a party hack for not alerting his constituents to the state's brewing financial tempest. He also circulated a damning quote from State Senate president Billy Bulger, who claimed that Olver would slap a tax on a galloping horse. The tax-and-spend charge got theatrical when Pierce began handing out pink plastic padlocks as a way of warning voters to "watch your wallets" around Democrats. With Massachusetts at the epicenter of the recession, Pierce charged that Olver's support of taxes on business had driven employers out of the state, and that only lower taxes and smaller government would help reduce high unemployment.

Some Massachusetts Democrats do have specific answers to the well-rehearsed G.O.P. line. Lisa Baskin, a longtime party organizer and a candidate in the primary, insisted that real tax inequity could be found in the state's regressive income tax. Low-income Massachusetts residents pay an average of 13.6 percent of their income in taxes and high-income people pay only 8.9 percent. Baskin also emphasized the federal government's role in the state's fiscal crisis, noting that between 1982 and 1988 alone there had been a $4.3 billion decrease in federal aid to Massachusetts, adding to the state's financial burden. Before being forced out of the race by lack of funds, Baskin got a chance to raise larger questions about federal spending policies, and she supported a 50 percent cut in military expenditures to help shift funds toward badly needed domestic programs. It's worth remembering that in my 1st District community of Northampton an average household pays $2,981 in federal taxes annually, $1,496 of which goes to the military, $265 to health care, $83 to education, $46 to housing, $18 to the environment, $12 to job training and 60 cents to the homeless.

Did Olver offer a clear political vision for re-examining national priorities? No. He called for Washington to stop spending so much money defending foreign allies but did not challenge the Bush Administration on any specific issues except abortion and the pending free-trade agreement with Mexico. With the district's largest city, Pittsfield, losing thousands of industrial jobs to overseas workers, Olver knew that voters there just didn't buy Pierce's claim that free trade would bring prosperity to their neck of the woods.

As Pierce continued to slam away at the tax question, Olver, like Dukakis, appeared incapable of mustering a passionate defense. His proposed solution to the region's economic crisis consisted of spending more money for industrial development and research. But he was unable to articulate ideas for national economic reform. This could be due to Olver's lack of political courage or his lack of oratorical skills. The televised debates resulted in painful viewing sessions for Democratic Party faithfuls. Billing himself as a "workhorse and not a showhorse," Olver was so incapable of an eloquent defense against Pierce's attacks that the local media were moved to declare the workhorse ready for the glue factory.

But it wasn't just his difficulty in getting the message out that made Olver's victory so tenuous. It was his inability to gather support among working-class voters in the traditionally Democratic city of Holyoke and other towns in the southern portion of the district. This erosion of the traditional Democratic constituency moved Representative Richard Neal, a Springfield Democrat, to wring his hands over the movement of the party from the concerns of working families.

Perhaps Olver's initial opposition to the gulf war made him fearful of taking on a popular Republican Administration in Washington. Unlike Baskin, who actively protested against the war, Olver kept his opposition quiet throughout his campaign. Although both Pierce and Olver claimed to be the true ideological successor to Conte, Olver was actually closer to the hugely popular Conte on the question of sending troops to the gulf. Conte was a maverick Republican who often found himself voting with Democrats during his thirty-two-year term in office. Before his death in February, he was one of three G.O.P. Congressmen to vote against Bush's decision to deploy troops. Conte was a wily and much-beloved politician who managed to vote his conscience, keep the district's liberals and conservatives content and still bring home the bacon from Washington.

In the absence of such seasoned leadership, the tone of political discussion in the district descended into partisan mudslinging. Olver attacked Pierce for his failure to condemn the sale of assault rifles, and Pierce raised the ghost of Willie Horton to suggest that Olver was soft on crime for his opposition to the death penalty. Pierce resurrected Conte's broadcast endorsement of his gubernatorial bid and played it as proof of his own fight for the state's underdog taxpayers. Olver countered by noting that Pierce had failed to pay his taxes on time for five years.

In an appeal to the area's progressive voters, Olver painted

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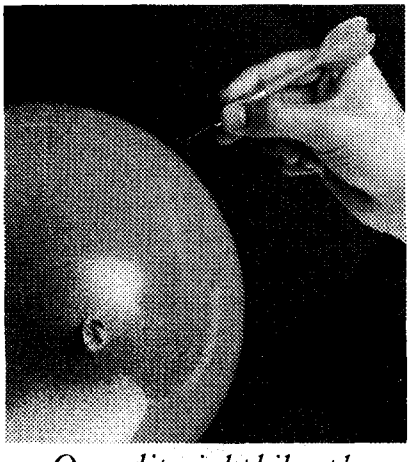

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Pierce as a "dangerous" conservative for his opposition to abortion rights and his votes against government spending for college scholarships. Sensing it was time for political expediency, Pierce attempted to moderate his abortion position by coming out against the Supreme Court ruling in *Rust v. Sullivan*. But his long voting record against abortion and his support until last year of a constitutional prohibition on a woman's right to choose opened Pierce to charges of flip-flopping on the issue. Olver aides walked around in rubber thongs to dramatize Pierce's flip-flop, and anti-abortion conservatives charged that Pierce's waffling had cost him crucial votes.

When the time came to bring in political celebrities, Pierce recruited the President and Mrs. Bush to stump on his behalf, and Olver brought in House Speaker Thomas Foley. But the President preferred to make his endorsement from Boston, and a White House aide claimed that the district was just too difficult to reach. This perplexed area residents who had just spent months watching troops and cargo bound for Operation Desert Storm pass through the Westover Air Force Base at the edge of the district.

In the closing days of an increasingly nasty campaign an Olver television ad showed a feeble elderly woman forced to sell her house to qualify for Medicaid. A National Republican Campaign Committee leaflet showed the gloved hands of a thief opening the window of a home. The race brought negative campaigning and emotional button-pushing to a new level of finesse.

The two candidates' attacks on each other as extremists out of step with mainstream voters raises the question as to exactly what mainstream means. In the 1st District, 50 percent of the voters are registered as independents, and there seems to be little enthusiasm for any flavor of national party politics. The three independent candidates in the race received only 2 percent of the vote, but they kept reminding voters that most politicians are bought and paid for under the system of private campaign financing. Members of the western Massachusetts–based Pro-Democracy Campaign, which favors public financing of all federal elections, contend that major-party candidates are unable to propose much in the way of economic or social reform as long as they are dependent on large out-of-district donors who are not necessarily keen on upsetting the status quo. The Democrats may have a tradition (however unobserved) of looking out for the working people of slender means, but those are not the same people who fund election campaigns.

As the first special election of the year and the first since the gulf war, this race was watched closely by political observers from around the country. Democrats should learn from this election that candidates who fail to offer a clear plan for economic recovery cannot rely on a progressive social platform to keep their constituents voting within party lines. If Democrats cannot make it clear to voters that national economic policies have an impact on day-to-day financial concerns, they will continue to spin their wheels answering charges of financial mismanagement and be routed by pro-choice Republicans. □

THE LAST PRESERVE

Guatemala Guards Its Rain Forests

VICTOR PERERA

When the Conservation International Foundation (C.I.F.) held its board meeting in Antigua, Guatemala, last February, vice president James Nations predicted that if tropical forest conservation failed in Guatemala, it did not stand a chance anywhere else in the hemisphere. A landmark 1990 law created a 4-million-acre Mayan Biosphere Reserve in the northern region of El Petén that is becoming *the* blueprint for rain-forest conservation in our part of the world.

In Antigua, Nations hailed the youthful staff of the National Council of Protected Areas (Conap), which manages the Biosphere Reserve, as "the finest group of conservationists in Latin America." Among other supporting factors Nations mentioned the "Ruta Maya," an ecotourism project, and the continuing negotiations to link the Petén with rain-forest reserves in southern Mexico and Belize to form a three-nation Maya Peace Park, the largest of its kind north of the Amazon. The U.S. Agency for International Development has put out bids for a $5 million package to create "extractive reserves" in the Petén for the sustainable exploitation of rain-forest products such as chicle gum and the ornamental Chamaedorea palm or *xate*.

Perhaps the most promising development is President Jorge Serrano Elías's aim to replace Vinicio Cerezo as Guatemala's "environmental president." Serrano, a Pentecostal preacher, aroused fears that he would steal a page from his mentor, born-again evangelical Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt, and "seize the presidency to carry out God's designs." But whereas former president Ríos Montt surrounded himself with cronies from his California-based Church of the Word, Serrano began on a pragmatic note when he named opposition leaders to head his Cabinet. (Critics point out he had little choice, as the narrow coalition Serrano rode to office is drastically short on talent and experience.) No appointment of Serrano's has proved more controversial than his selection of a hard-line conservationist engineer, Antonio Ferraté, to head the embattled National Commission of the Environment, which administers Conap.

In March, Ferraté kicked off his tenure by revoking all logging concessions inside the Mayan Biosphere Reserve. "If we give in to the loggers' demands and grant concessions," Ferraté reasoned, "thousands of hungry colonists will use the logging roads to slash and burn protected forest for their corn fields. And the cattle ranchers and oil drillers will be right behind them." Ferraté has a grim precedent to draw on: In the past decade Petén, which occupies the northern third of Gua-

Victor Perera, author of Rites: A Guatemalan Boyhood, *is working on a contemporary portrait of Guatemala.*

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temala, has lost more than half its forest cover to loggers, cattle ranchers and the still rising influx of new colonists [see Perera, "A Forest Dies in Guatemala," November 6, 1989].

In private, Ferraté acknowledged that his uncompromising stand would be taken as a declaration of war by the powerful loggers and their allies in the army and in the government's corrupt Forestry Department, Digebos.

Nations, who worked for ten years in Chiapas, Mexico, and Petén before he joined C.I.F. last year, warns that Guatemala's courageous conservation efforts could still be torpedoed by contraband loggers and their friends in high places. Months before the revocation of concessions was made public, loggers in Naranjo, on the Biosphere Reserve's wild northwest frontier, incited colonists to set fire to Conap guardposts. The four resource monitors assigned to Naranjo, who are not permitted to carry weapons, fled for their lives. Inevitably, this assault hurt the morale of guards in other stations throughout the reserve, as the contrabandists intended. Elsewhere, mayoral candidates ran for office on pledges to rid Petén of all meddlesome conservationists.

In February I met with biologist Hilda Rivera, the 29-year-old coordinator of Conap, who became the chief target of the loggers after she intercepted trailers loaded with 48,000 cubic feet of mahogany board lumber inside the reserve. The logging permit bore an authorization from Digebos, which has offices inside Petén's chief military garrison, in Santa Elena.

After Rivera filed charges against the contrabandists, then-President Cerezo called her about a spate of death threats coming through his office. She adamantly refused the offer of a bodyguard. "What would I say to my 18-year-old unarmed guards, who stare down smugglers with guns pointed to their heads, if I were to show up with an armed bodyguard? It is out of the question!" Rivera's "iron lady" reputation owes much to her mentor Mario Dary, the father of Guatemala's environmental movement, who established the country's first ecological parks, or biotopes, starting in the late 1960s. Dary was murdered in 1981 after he tried to stem the flow of drugs in San Carlos University, where he was rector. But he could as easily have been killed by any one of a host of other enemies of his environmental initiatives. (Rivera resigned her Conap post in March but plans to continue her conservation work in Petén.)

Last fall I toured the reserve with Rivera's assistant, Román Carrera, a 23-year-old Petén native and undergraduate student. The future of the reserve is in the hands of an ecological youth corps of university students, farmers and chicle gatherers, most in their early 20s. We toured Conap stations in Dos Aguadas, Uaxactún and Tikal, and we had encounters with smugglers, a poisonous snake and the head of the "Sawmill of the North," Antonio del Cid, who bitterly denounced Conap's restrictions on his activities. But the gloating tone I remembered from our encounter two years earlier, when loggers had carte blanche to harvest hardwood timber, had been replaced by a sanctimonious self-justification. Del Cid claimed that leftist guerrillas had seized all but 200 of the mahoganies he had felled in the Sierra del Lacandón, inside the reserve, and forced his chain saws and skidders out of the area.

Carrera, who like many of Conap's seventy-five resource monitors once worked for the sawmills, assured me that del Cid's crew had taken out all the 2,000 marked mahoganies before their work was disrupted by guerrilla collaborators and the logging ban. The roads they bulldozed through the forest would be used by colonists to down any surviving hardwoods. Carrera warned that in common with the fer-de-lance we encountered that morning, "a logger is most dangerous when his back is to the wall."

My admiration for Carrera and his colleagues rose a notch after I met with the interim commander of the Santa Elena garrison, Col. Gómez Portillo. (The base's previous commander, Col. García Catalán, had been reassigned the week before, apparently to protect him from fallout from the investigation into the murder of the American Michael De Vine, who is thought to have stumbled on drug-trade activity involving the garrison. In Guatemala, human rights, drugs and forest conservation are increasingly intertwined.) "Who is Conap allied with?" exclaimed Gómez Portillo, a strapping, blue-eyed six-footer who did his postgraduate training in Leavenworth and Fort Benning. "They ask us to collaborate with them, but where do their loyalties lie? Digebos has its offices here in our barracks, and we work in perfect harmony."

I reminded the colonel that in accordance with the Conap charter, to which the army is a signatory, it is responsible for protecting borders against illegal contraband and other depredation. "Yes, but where are those borders? They have never been clearly defined. How can I deploy my men along hundreds of kilometers of borders that don't exist?"

"I believe they show up quite clearly in Landsat satellite images," I said. "They show incursions by Mexicans into northern Petén to log, hunt and cut clearings for their cattle."

"I have patrolled those areas myself," Gómez Portillo parried. "I found no loggers and no herds of cattle. A few fields

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of marijuana, yes, and we are dealing with those in collaboration with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency." (García Catalán had warned Rivera, "If you see marijuana fields, check with me first. Chances are they may belong to influential families, and are therefore out of bounds.")

Gómez Portillo insisted on taking me around the base, one of the largest in Guatemala, to show me each of the 200 saplings his soldiers had planted in keeping with the military's new conservation awareness. A poster on his office wall showed a cat in army fatigues planting trees with peasants under the legend, "The army and the people are one big family."

Most of the 200 saplings planted in remote corners of the base were already engulfed in weeds, and no attempt had been made to camouflage the giant felled trees in zones of new construction. In the artillery range we passed a billboard with a slogan aimed at new recruits: "The enemy is not defeated in battle. You vanquish him by destroying his mind, his intelligence and his will."

At dinner with Román Carrera that evening, we went over the encounters with Antonio del Cid and Gómez Portillo. "It is true," Carrera said, "that for men like del Cid and the colonel, a tree is either an enemy or a product to be cut up and sold for profit. But with international support, we are at last putting these men on the defensive. We of Conap and the other conservation agencies can help to educate a new generation of soldiers and young army officers who are sensitive to the importance of protecting our natural resources. The fact of hunger is an imperative here; those of us who have worked the soil would rather face an armed contrabandist than evict a poor maize farmer. When we look a soldier in the eye, we know that he may have worked his fingers to the bone in his father's *milpa* or picked coffee in a wealthy landowner's plantation. We have the patience to address that soldier because we know we are setting a precedent for those who come after us. The teaching of environmental science, whose natural laws supersede the military's and the loggers' codes, is at the heart of what we are trying to accomplish."

Carrera's eloquent appraisal is being put to the test along the Mexican border. President Serrano's new Defense Minister, Gen. Luis Enrique Garcia Mendoza, appears to be taking seriously the military's responsibility under Conap's charter. Two hundred soldiers and elements of the Treasury Police accompanied Conap resource monitors on patrol along the Biosphere Reserve's northern border, not far from the Mayan ruins of El Mirador. In the past year, after the governor of Chiapas declared a complete logging ban in that Mexican state, idle sawmills in neighboring Campeche and Tabasco have turned to processing timber smuggled with falsified contracts from inside Guatemala. In late March the army confiscated 3,500 contraband mahoganies and Spanish cedars near the border, and seized a number of vans, bulldozers and chain saws. The army also arrested seventy-two Mexican contrabandists. An arrest order was issued for Abraham Sión Lizama, a former Petén governor who collaborated with the contrabandists, but it has since been rescinded by a Petén judge.

The arrests sparked an outcry in southern Mexico and in the "loggers' mafia" in Guatemala, where the conservative press has targeted Conap with a barrage of defamatory articles. But the Petén sawmill operators, who are only too glad to be rid of their Mexican competitors, have been placated thus far by the offer of the 3,500 decommissioned hardwoods.

If the contraband logging from Mexico can be halted, it will mark the first important victory for conservation forces in Guatemala, a victory that will resonate well beyond the borders of the Mayan Biosphere Reserve. □

THE DOGS BARK BUT

The Bandwagon Moves On

TERRY SOUTHERN

Back last August, when the Bandwagon first loaded up and headed out, it was a grand, indeed one may safely say, *glorious* affair. Flag-bedecked and festooned with yellow bows and ribbons as bright as the sun, the Bandwagon rolled out to the sound of toe-tapping church hymns and high-stepping march tunes. It was irresistible; everyone clambered aboard. Not just Johnny Six-pack and the Missus but plenty of soft-spoken egghead types as well; and lots of lovable old Will Rogers types, and gentle womenfolk of every ilk. It was like being at the cast party for a production of *Our Town*. Only your eccentric, reclusive, misfit, wet-blanket, Ralph Nader/Ramsey Clark types were not represented. But everyone said, "No problem. Good riddance." Things were too perfect to entertain any negative thoughts; the *togetherness* of it all was simply overwhelming; the Bandwagon started picking up steam.

The actual "war" was no hindrance to the Bandwagon; if anything, it was vaguely pleasant and comforting—somewhat like a small-town picnic on a lazy Sunday afternoon, where the fireworks are rather second-rate but still engaging enough not to switch channels, because after all, it was *live* and, theoretically at least, something unpredicted *could* occur at any moment. Who could say, maybe another Scud would get through and something far-out and dramatic would happen. So with sustained fanfare, the Bandwagon rolled on. But inside the war itself, a curious unraveling began:

"Ah may be crazy as a dang coot," a Georgia pilot drawled during an interview with an obscure small-town paper, "but them ops today reminded me of shootin' jackrabbit back home. After a while, me an' Leroy Davis started makin' bets. I don't think ole Leroy had ever been on a jack-shoot, an' he missed a few. 'Hot damn,' he kept sayin', 'them little uns are *fast*!' So I showed 'im how you had to give them little uns about a six-foot lead. He caught on quick an' we raised the bet. Then when we come across a T.C. full of 'em, we didn't jest zap the vehicle with a cannon like we usually would've

Terry Southern's novel Texas Summer *will be published this fall by Little, Brown.*

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Prepared by Public Media Center.

For those who've learned that wars don't end with victory parades.

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done, we switched our M.G.s into the single-shot mode an' started plinkin' 'em right outta that truck, one at a time, like empty beer cans. Hot damn!

"An' I'll tell you somethin' else," he concluded. "Ole Leroy turned out to be a pretty damn good shot after all. Yeah, he took me for about three K . . . before he started to throw up."

There was another momentary glitch when some of the so-called Alternative Press began to act up. One magazine reprinted the interview with the Georgia pilot, while another featured a story headlined:

'TOO MUCH LIKE SHOOTING FISH IN A BARREL,' COMPLAINS MARINE COL. OF GULF WAR

But such attempts to denigrate the war effort received short shrift. "If they act up again," commented the President, "we'll start kicking butt. Hell, we'll put the I.R.S. on their tail; they'll wish they'd never been born." So the Bandwagon rolled on, as jaunty as could be, and with everyone just as pleased as Punch.

One reason everyone was "pleased as Punch" was because many of the briefings about the "war" were delivered by the commander of the forces himself—a rotund personage whom people looked upon as "joviality incarnate" due to his marked resemblance to one of those colorful bottle-stoppers made in caricature of a happy, slightly demented, peasant innkeeper, sold in the tourist shops of Scandinavia and Luxembourg. It was generally felt that nothing could go wrong while this jolly fellow was in charge, despite the occasional tedious déjà vu images of homeless weeping women and children that somehow leaked into the coverage. No big deal; it was announced that an estimated 150,000 Iraqis had been killed in the saturation bombing.

Then, on a day like any other day, or so it seemed, came the momentous occasion when the President declared that the war was over. "Victory" was proclaimed, and the Bandwagon picked up steam. The Alternative Press, no strangers to buffoonery, and again at the expense of common decency, attempted to downplay the historic moment with garish headlines:

WILL A CAKEWALK IN THE SAND COOL OUT THE BLOOD'N'GUTS YEN OF THE OLD EL WIMPO?

WILL A GOLIATH-KICKS-DAVID'S-BUTT SYNDROME FLY IN THIS MAN'S HACIENDA? 'NO WAY, JOSÉ,' SAYS TOP AIDE, 'WE'RE LOOKING FOR BEAR.'

Such comments were dismissed in quick order as "sour grapes by the sanction freaks" and had no discernible effect on the momentum of the Bandwagon.

And then came the Big Symposium—held at one of the swanky schools on the East Coast—by a group that the Administration described as "notorious egghead/bleeding hearts," who tried their best to cheapen the image of the Bandwagon and its triumphant journey. "Has American life become so bankrupt," asked one, a professor of sociology, "so empty and wholly devoid of meaning and value . . . that we must look for self-esteem in defeating the second-rate army of a Third World country?"

Also on the panel was a retired Army general, much decorated and formerly known for his gung-ho heroics. "It is true," he said, "that the battlefield is the cradle and fountainhead of self-esteem, but I do not believe any rational man can attain it by inflicting death from miles above, nor by shooting people who are running away." He shook his head, rather sadly it seemed. "That is not the stuff, sir, of which heroes are made."

It was the famous psychologist, however, whose opinion may have been the most vexing. "There are megabucks in war," he said, "and there are megabucks in victory celebrations. By continuing to extol the 'victory' that we know is hollow and absurd, we are using the methods of the cynical politicians of Mississippi who extol and appeal to the 'whiteness' of the voters, equating it with 'Americanism' and whipping up a frenzy of self-righteousness and eager donations."

That did not go over well with practically anyone at all, but he kept at it like a dog with a bone: "The Bandwagon represents an illusion of victory over some dark and nameless adversary. The energy generated in celebrating such a victory is important to the powers-that-be because they can channel it toward whatever end they wish, which includes, of course, setting up the next hit of the New World Order—North Korea? Libya? Cuba?—each replete with its victory celebration."

Despite the acknowledged pre-eminence of its participants, the symposium received scant coverage by the media. It was as though it didn't happen. Even CNN stayed clear of it, which surprised a lot of people. Others were glad, however. "At least it proves," they said, "that Turner isn't as much under Jane Fonda's thumb as we thought." And everyone cheered crazily as the Bandwagon rolled on. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

A Forward Glance

ALEXANDRA JOHNSON

THE SELECTED SHORT STORIES OF EDITH WHARTON. *Edited by R.W.B. Lewis. Scribner's. 390 pp. $24.95.*

THE STORIES OF EDITH WHARTON, Vol. 2. *Edited by Anita Brookner. Carroll & Graf. 310 pp. $18.95. Paper $10.95.*

"The short story," wrote Edith Wharton in *The Writing of Fiction*, must act as "a shaft driven straight into the heart of human experience." In the eighty-six stories the celebrated author produced over her lifetime, Wharton found the ideal form to penetrate the heart of her own experience. If the short story is "the nervous side-glance" of literature, as V.S. Pritchett suggests, then it is perfectly suited to Wharton's gifts: the corrosively ironic eye, the keen instinct for situation, the unflinching capacity for social observation. While identified primarily as a novelist of manners—the coolly satiric sibyl of old New York—it is in the short story that Wharton's creative legacy is most vividly felt. In story after story, as the superb collections at hand show, Wharton evokes the most modern of epiphanies: the drama of the emotional outsider.

It was a drama Wharton knew well. Born into the privileged circles of New York society, she grew up in rootless grandeur. Her family moved to Europe in 1866 to avoid the inflation that followed the Civil War, and after returning, in 1872, Edith spent a desultory childhood in the New York and Newport mansions in which she was being groomed to serve as hostess. Yet the echoes inside those mausoleums sounded a deeper emotional isolation, as Wharton's creative instincts were kept in critical check by her mother. After her first attempt at a story of a woman apologizing to a guest for a messy drawing room, Wharton recalled, "Timorously I submitted this to my mother and never shall I forget the sudden drop of my creative frenzy when she returned it with the icy comment: 'Drawing rooms are always tidy.' "

Alexandra Johnson is the author of a forthcoming study of women's literary creativity, The Novel Self.

The lifelong conflict between Wharton's creative and conditioned selves successfully transferred itself to her work. The psychological claustrophobia that her characters flee in the longer masterpieces—*The House of Mirth*, *The Age of Innocence*—is intensified in the short fiction. Here the hectic search for self is an impulse less of leisure than of escape. It has a feverish intensity to it. (Nearly one-third of her stories were written during Wharton's marriage to a mentally unstable husband.) Yet, as is true of her characters, it is often seen as ironic that anyone so well off should suffer such a sense of displacement. Wharton's series of houses—The Mount at Lenox, the Paris apartment and, finally, the converted convent at Hyères—reflects the deeper quest to find a home for her own talents. By 40, she'd found it in writing. In her 1934 autobiography, *A Backward Glance*, Wharton wrote, "I felt like some homeless waif who, after trying for years to take out naturalization papers, and being rejected by every country, has finally acquired a nationality." In the large houses she began writing the small stories that unleashed her creative talents.

Wharton was the first American writer to detect and dissect the dominant emotion of modern life: ambiguity.

If becoming a writer, as Wharton biographer Cynthia Griffin Wolff notes, meant a "relinquishing of the habit of denial and retreat," it's not coincidental that Wharton gravitated instinctively to the short story. It provided the ideal form of radical compression in which to confront intensity of emotion. (It's fitting that someone who spent a lifetime breaking out of the parenthesis of her own experience should opt for the one literary form that most resembled it.) Those who associate Wharton with the seemingly embalmed calm of the studio photos—with her rope of pearls and mantle of furs—will find instead a writer of subversive originality. With her divorce in 1913, Wharton discovered sexual awakening with Morton Fullerton. So, too, the creative mastery of her craft. It is the full scope of Wharton's creative psyche that these two collections chart. In what could be a credo for both her writing and life, Wharton wrote in her diary in March of 1926, "Life is either always a tight-rope or a feather-bed. Give me the tight-rope."

Wharton's writing career is framed by the short story. Between her first published story in 1891, at age 29, and "All Souls," written several months before her death, in 1937, she published eleven volumes of stories. Initially most appeared in *Harper's*, *Scribner's* and the *Atlantic Monthly*. While handsomely paid, Wharton refused to have her stories treated as "prose by the yard." (Her wicked satire on publishers, "The Descent of Man," is included in Lewis's anthology.) The short stories fall into three distinct periods: the first, between 1899 and 1905; the second, between 1908 and 1916; and the third, after World War I to 1937. If Wharton's earliest stories are hallmarked by the tensions in women's lives, her middle and final stories concentrate more broadly on artists and the supernatural, in which, wrote Wharton, the teller "should be well frightened in the telling."

Unlike her contemporaries, Wharton didn't change the short story's form. Compare her at her height in the 1910s-30s to others writing in English: Katherine Mansfield's "Prelude," Woolf's "Kew Gardens," Joyce's "The Dead." There's none of the daring experimentation of form: the lyrical atomization of Woolf and Joyce, the narrative and emotional ellipses of Hemingway. If she inherited the naturalistic style of the French and Russians, she was the first American writer to detect and to dissect the dominant emotion of modern life: ambiguity. In that sense, Wharton is distinctly modern. Her stories embody Chekhov's injunction that a writer's job is to pose, not solve, a question. The measure of these stories is the rich invention with which she achieves that. Wharton's stories might be subtitled *A Forward Glance*, less for the modernity of her topics—divorce, illegitimacy, adultery—than for the unrelenting clarity of their questions.

Too often, though, Wharton is considered a literary social historian, chronicling the extinct tribes of old New York.

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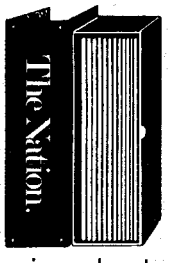

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It's true that as a social vivisectionist she fills her stories with period *arrivistes*, dour Protestants, intellectual frauds, the small minds that often accompany large fortunes. To identify her solely as an observer of social hypocrisies, though, is to underestimate the fierce intelligence at work in her stories. Wharton's drawing rooms are merely settings for the claustrophobic props of shared life; her real subject is the haunting realization of the unlived life. With an unerring instinct for telling detail and a pitch-perfect ear, she manages to register the erotic charge in dialogue, the *frisson* of possibility in the unfulfilled self.

To that end, Wharton has been faithfully served by her two editors, R.W.B. Lewis, the Pulitzer Prize–winning Wharton biographer, and British novelist Anita Brookner. Lewis has culled twenty-one stories from his two 1971 volumes into one; Brookner, conversely, has added a second to her highly acclaimed 1990 volume. While many of the stories overlap, the differences in the anthologies are instructive. If Lewis mines Wharton's psychological dramas, Brookner works the unexpected angles of the situations themselves: the brittle fortunes and complicities of character. Brookner has included a number of uncollected stories, such as "The Lamp of Psyche" and "*Les Metteurs en Scène*," but both collections stress Wharton's impressive narrative range: from the comic cultural satires of "The Pelican" and "Xingu," to the supernatural in "Kerfol" and "The Eyes." These two collections should be read in succession. Together they chart a writer's apprenticeship in the complete mastery of her craft.

"Situation," not character, wrote Wharton, "is the main concern of the short story." And Wharton's narrative crucible, her vexing situation, is the Marriage Question. For more than forty-two years she worked and reworked its possibilities. While most incisively explored in Lewis's anthology, Brookner's also captures the good faces put on bad compromises. In "Souls Belated," a recently divorced woman, profoundly ambivalent over her lover's marriage overtures, says: "I begin to see what marriage is for. It's to keep people away from each other." Tired of their illicit life, he says: "I didn't know we ran away to found a new system of ethics." Their Italian lake hotel is full of "the same keep-off-the-grass morality" they'd run away from.

In Wharton, marriage commonly has the geometry of the triangle, the calculus of commerce. In "The Other Two," a third husband "held so many shares in his wife's personality . . . his predecessors were his partners in the business." In "Pomegranate Seed," a Persephone of a husband is doomed to shuttle between present and deceased wives. Possession, Wharton makes clear, is the small ways others haunt us not from but *to* the grave. The third party, though, is often the weight of memory itself. In the master story "Autres Temps . . . ," a divorcée endures enforced social passivity simply because "traditions that have lost their meaning are the hardest of all to destroy." For her, being an "ex" is the *ex* in exile.

Throughout her career, Wharton trained her eye on failure of nerve, some final hesitancy of character. As a lover in "The Long Run" succinctly puts it, "One way of finding out whether a risk is worth taking is *not* to take it, and then see what one becomes in the long run." The final price is a deadening from falsely intelligent choices. In these stories, adultery is the lies not to another but to oneself. With brutal clarity, Wharton's couples, whether marital or adulterous, confront "the same little cautious virtues and the same little frightened vices." Often their sense of stifling marginality stems from their own incapacity to act. In the classic "Roman Fever," two women sitting near the Palentine at dusk excavate the past, uncovering a long-hidden secret.

Despite the "dulling propinquity" of spouses, these stories are not bleak. In "The Other Two," a character offers a more generous accommodation of marriage: "For it *was* an art, and made up, like all others, of concessions, eliminations and embellishments." In the zany "After Holbein," where a senile couple entertains imaginary dinner guests, or in "Duration," with its competing centenarians, couples still pair—and parry—until death. Jealousy and boredom are balanced by the shared inventory of desires. In both collections, marriage is often characterized by Dr. Johnson's comment on a friend's remarriage: the triumph of hope over experience.

Wharton's instinct for satire is not limited to marriage. Among the strongest stories are her cultural satires lampooning intellectual and social pretensions. In the wickedly funny "Xingu," provincialism is an interior geography. Small minds in small towns form the Uplift or Lunch Club, headed by Mrs. Ballinger, "one of the ladies who pursue Culture in bands, as though it were dangerous to meet

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alone." In drawing rooms festooned with unread highbrow tomes, Wharton's characters acquire culture and learning with the indiscriminate greed of amateur collectors.

In stories like "The Legend," Wharton draws a deeper creative connection between learning and living vicariously. One of the many stories featuring writers, it examines the hazards of the double life. In "The Long Run," a writer discovers to default in love is to default in creativity. Wharton gives to her characters the very habits of denial and retreat the writing of stories cured her of. In this sense, Wharton isn't a dedicated observer just of the American scene but of the human condition. And it's this that these two volumes celebrate. Lewis has compiled what will stand as the single definitive volume of Wharton's short stories. The subtlety and surety of his choices, an almost novelistic sense of transitions, make this a model anthology. If Brookner's selections concentrate less on the ghost stories, they catch a deeper fright—the phosphorescent sightings of one's past.

In these stories, both editors have embraced Lionel Trilling's definition of manners as "a culture's hum and buzz of implication . . . which is made up of half-uttered or unuttered or unutterable expressions of value." If today the minimalist story is the empty sum of our gestures, then in these brief narratives Wharton gives luminous shape to fear, desire and memory. Like the heroine in "Autres Temps . . . ," with some brave final clarity we glimpse the tangled knot that is the human heart. □

Strange, Unknowable Things

LARRY BENSKY

BLOOD OF BROTHERS: Life and War in Nicaragua. *By Stephen Kinzer. Putnam. 450 pp. $24.95.*

NICARAGUA: A Decade of Revolution. *Edited by Lou Dematteis with Chris Vail. Norton. 168 pp. $39.95.*

New York Times correspondent Stephen Kinzer was for years a man whom people in the United States sympathetic to the Sandinista movement in Nicaragua loved to hate. Week after week, year after year, Kinzer's dispatches accentuated everything that might contribute to the Sandinistas' downfall. While the vicious U.S.-funded and U.S.-instigated *contra* war decimated the Nicaraguan populace and contributed heavily to the ruin of that country's economy, Kinzer habitually stressed the Sandinistas' failures rather than the complexities of the challenges they faced.

Times readers accustomed to a tradition of Latin American reporting more or less in tune with the White House and State Department policy—the execrable work of Shirley Christian in South America and the harassment of Raymond Bonner in El Salvador are two good examples of the *Times* approach—were hardly surprised by Kinzer's dispatches. Yet there was something naggingly different about Kinzer. As his five-year stint in Nicaragua progressed, it became clear that he was not just getting his Latin America ticket punched on the way to a book contract or behind-the-scenes New York office oblivion. He seemed aware of Nicaragua's language, culture and history and thus able to chart his own course instead of triangulating among the usual agendas of translator, U.S. Embassy and the foreign desk in New York. We now find out, in *Blood of Brothers*, that Kinzer was, after all, greatly troubled by what he witnessed during his tour in Nicaragua, and that he does have a pretty good, though selective, understanding of what went on there.

The story begins with young Stephen, armed with only "an undergraduate degree in history, a desire to see the world, and a vague sense that a journalist's life might suit me," descending upon the ugly, post-earthquake backwater that was Managua in 1976. Anastasio Somoza, last in a dynasty of dictators installed and maintained for four decades by Washington administrations, was continuing to repress a nationwide insurgency through killing and torture. Kinzer, shy in public ("Usually I refrained from asking questions at news conferences"), nevertheless developed a sense that the insurrectionary Nicaragua he was experiencing was a different place from the country with minor problems that "had been created in the Carter administration's imagination." *The Boston Globe* began buying his articles, and he was soon one of a pack of U.S. reporters on the story. Eventually he opened a Managua bureau for *The New York Times*.

During those exciting years in the late 1970s Kinzer realized that the Sandinistas were a broad-based, historically legitimized, altruistic force whose time had come. Alas, that wasn't all he realized. Although he acknowledges that the Somozas "cruelly and brutally . . . bequeath[ed] to their successors a nation in physical, political, economic, and moral ruin," and that the Sandinistas represented the only alternative, he could never forgive them for acting like revolutionaries. He criticizes what he sees as the "masterful deception" by which the Sandinistas convinced people that they were "dedicated to pluralism, liberty and orderly social progress," and he condemns the Directorate as "a mysterious body, to which no outsiders had access."

Here as elsewhere in *Blood of Brothers*, Kinzer, like many of his colleagues reporting at this very moment in *The New York Times* from various hot spots around the world, displays a craving for the quintessential moment in which revolutionaries either gain legitimacy by adopting the supposedly pristine processes of the United States or head down the slippery slope to the gulag.

There are two usual corollaries to this type of foreign reporting. One is a facile polarity, in which there are seen to be only two sides to every story; as Kinzer says about Nicaragua, each side was fulfilling the other's worst fears. The other is the view that any deviation from the imaginary alchemy that is supposed to transform seething slums into Switzerlands must be caused by frighteningly familiar despotic impulses on the part of "messianic, intellectually arrogant" leaders. The authorial voice of *Blood of Brothers* vacillates between these clichés of a *New York Times*man abroad and the admissions of a kinder, gentler Kinzer that "strange and unknowable things" happened all the time in Nicaragua, and that his "search for the truth of what was happening there would never be fully successful, because in such a place there is always more than one truth."

He is at his best in this latter mode, when describing the colossal and depressing difficulties of functioning, even with a *Times* reporter's seemingly infinite expense account, in Managua's heat and ugliness and in the insect-infested jungles; or when writing about the effects of the *contra* war and Sandinista ineptitude

Larry Bensky produced the PBS documentary Nicaragua: These Same Hands *in 1981 and covered the 1990 Nicaraguan elections for Pacifica Radio and* The Nation.

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in the out-of-the-way communities he braved the elements (and the *contras*) to visit; or when sharply dissecting the insane fabulations by which Ronald Reagan and his knight, Sir Oliver North, distorted the real situation in Nicaragua in order to justify their vendetta against that suffering land. On the other hand, Kinzer is at his worst not only when applying the inflexible polarities of geopolitics but also in his not-so-subtle annoyance with Nicaragua, where he views his assignment retroactively without "any special warmth."

Nicaraguans "often treated me as though I might somehow be able to heal their ills or relieve their tribulations," he observes, without recognizing that they may have been right. He exults in minor instances of bribery—a few packs of cigarettes could get him through roadblocks—or what are, to him, harmless acts of deception; for example, he invented an organization called "Rice for Peace" by which to charm his way to places he wanted to visit. He shows no understanding of how his actions relate to the misery he elsewhere so eloquently describes, or of the humanity of a Nicaraguan teenager desperate for a smoke or a bag of rice or a sense of solidarity from abroad—a kid who might, in that country's astonishing (and still evolving) political process, become the mayor of his community in the not-so-distant future.

Kinzer was hardly alone among the foreign press corps in misunderstanding Nicaraguans' enthusiasms, scorning their search for new structures and almost incidentally manipulating their misery to get a basically one-sided story. What made him especially dangerous was the obvious influence of his pieces in reinforcing the skewed version of events in Nicaragua that the Reagan-North-Abrams cabal was peddling to Congress and the media. Such one-sidedness is ever-present in *Blood of Brothers*, even though it is much nuanced by Kinzer's reflections on his experience. He characterizes the 1984 election, for example, as a "charade," without bothering to make reference to the Latin American Studies Association's extensive legitimization of that event or to the international parliamentary delegations' similar endorsements. Kinzer fails to make the connection between candidate Arturo Cruz's withdrawal from the race and the presence of that worthy candidate on the C.I.A.'s payroll at the time, though he does mention forty pages later, in passing and in another connection, that Cruz "like other senior contras was receiving a handsome CIA retainer."

The now-notorious 1984 bombing of former Sandinista leader Edén Pastora's La Penca press conference is reported without any reference to the extensive investigation conducted by one of the victims, Tony Avirgan, and his wife, Martha Honey; or to the ongoing Costa Rican judicial and legislative inquiries that implicate a number of United States citizens in the affair. In fact, Kinzer describes *contra* activities in Costa Rica without mentioning John Hull, Rob Owen or Richard Secord—or, for that matter, Joseph Fernandez, the C.I.A. station chief. Although Kinzer makes it clear that the *contras* were a bloodthirsty lot militarily and were ruled by ambition and selfishness politically, he fails to flesh out that portrait by any reference to their unsavory financial manipulations and alleged drug dealing. Nor does he explore the question of George Bush's involvement in sustaining them.

As might be expected, Kinzer is especially eloquent when describing the Sandinistas' cruel and counterproductive treatment of the Atlantic Coast populations in the early 1980s. Although he does show how that policy was reversed, he neglects to bring the story up to date by describing the arrangements for autonomy that the Sandinistas negotiated there—arrangements that were opposed by the U.S.-supported UNO coalition and its presidential candidate, Violeta Chamorro, but that apparently satisfied sufficient numbers of people to win the Sandinistas a significant presence in the autonomous legislatures (thirty-eight out of ninety-one seats).

Kinzer was in the country while the new Nicaraguan Constitution was being debated in hundreds of meetings and negotiating sessions in 1986—a more open, democratic process than the framing of our own—but he does not mention that document or the process that produced it in *Blood of Brothers*. Nor is there any mention of the hundreds of Cara Al Pueblo ("Face to Face With the People") sessions held by President Daniel Ortega and others, or of the Sandinista popular groups that, with varying degrees of success, provided dignity, organization and mutual support to artists, teachers, health workers and women for the first time in Nicaraguan history.

Discussing such democratic and empowering efforts, however experimental, remains outside the agenda for Kinzer and *The New York Times*. It is hardly surprising to learn that the ultimate lesson Kinzer draws from his Nicaraguan experience is that failing to defer to the "principles of free enterprise" or to consult the "moral influence of the Catholic bishops" assaults the human spirit, which will inevitably "rebel and say no" to such social alternatives as Sandinismo.

The photographs and text in Lou Dematteis and Chris Vail's *Nicaragua: A Decade of Revolution* both complement and contradict Kinzer's narrative. Overwhelmingly focused on the ghastly effects of the mercenary war, the book's 141 pictures by forty-seven photographers are a powerful year-by-year portrait of the country's agony. There is a brief, useful summary of each year's events by the London *Guardian*'s former senior correspondent in Central America, Anthony Jenkins. And in three essays the great Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano notes that for people in countries like Nicaragua, for "prisoners of need, doomed to isolation and violence," capitalism is "not a dream to be made a reality, but a nightmare come true."

Galeano writes that the Sandinistas' electoral reversal in 1990 made him feel like "a child lost in the storm." He criticizes the "theoreticians of disenchantment," which would be a perfect characterization of Kinzer. And Galeano advocates a renewal of faith that "the human condition is not doomed to selfishness and the obscene pursuit of money." Experiencing the extraordinary photographs collected in *Nicaragua: A Decade of Revolution*, one can only share once again the sadness of that nation—and hope that he's right. □

BOOK NOTE.

ERIC LOTT

I AM ELVIS: A Guide to Elvis Impersonators. *By American Graphic Systems, Inc. Pocket Books. 128 pp. $8.95.*

Reports of Elvis Presley's death, as the tabloids routinely remind us, have been greatly exaggerated. Nowhere is this clearer than in *I Am Elvis: A Guide to Elvis Impersonators*. This apparently sober document records the bios and vital statistics—birthdate, height/weight, astrological sign and agent's phone number—of

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sixty-five performers of varying resemblance to the King. There are heavily bearded Elvises, 4-year-old Elvises and Elvis duos; Italian Elvises, Greek Elvises, Jewish Elvises, a Lady Elvis, even a Black Elvis. Most of the performers are working class and stress the Pelvis's route from rags to king of rock 'n' roll. Like baseball and the Statue of Liberty, the figure of Elvis guards the way into America.

Not, of course, to everyone's satisfaction. For the gloomy, Elvis impersonators confirm the cretinizing powers of "mass" culture. In an America of simulation and deceit, a Joe Elvis or an Elvis Little may seem another instance of the chronic ache of "hyperreality," as Umberto Eco has called it, being one more fake in a land without qualities. And for pop groups like Public Enemy or Living Colour, fakery in this case means a performer who got more from black culture than he gave. Just these suspicions, however, make *I Am Elvis* worth looking at for what it reveals about the place of Elvis in the life of the white working class. In essence it recounts a series of popular appropriations of Elvis and attests to the kinds of meanings that are presently constructed in His name.

Most of these artists seem wholly versed in the arcana and trajectory of Elvis's career—his meteoric rise in the mid-1950s, the long lapse into silly movies in the '60s, the 1968 comeback, the late concert tours before the sad decline to sudden death in 1977. While some impersonators perform a whole range of Presley music, the raw '50s Elvis and the kitschy '70s Elvis are the favorites, according to the two principal myths they embody.

The first has to do with the very art of impersonation. No fan clubs or subcultural styles will suffice here; the body of Elvis must be inhabited. Behind this seemingly bizarre demand lies a history of imitation in which Elvis looms large. Himself an alleged impostor, the historical referent of Norman Mailer's 1957 *The White Negro*, Elvis inherited a blackface tradition that lives a disguised, vestigial life in his imitators. Nobody who thinks with their ears can dismiss Elvis as merely a case of racial rip-off, but the legacy of blackface does lie behind both Elvis and the need for his impersonation, as the entry on Black Elvis, Clearance Giddens, wryly suggests: "Fans . . . don't seem to mind that Clearance doesn't look the part because he certainly *sounds* like Elvis." And no wonder, since he's the imitation's "source," or rather its goal.

In fact, the profiles in *I Am Elvis* indicate that a racialized drama of masculinity supports the myth of early Elvis—white men copping the bodily demeanor, the virility, cool, humility, abandon or *gaité de coeur* that comprise white ideologies of black manhood. In *North Toward Home* (1967) Elvis's fellow Mississippian Willie Morris remembers "a stage, when we were about thirteen, in which we 'went Negro.' " The popularity of Elvis and his impersonators suggests that the assumption of dominant codes of masculinity in the United States is partly negotiated through an imaginary black interlocutor, that white male fantasies of black men undergird the "manliness" white men grow up to occupy. The achievement of Elvis impersonators is that they both glorify and repress this fascination with "blackness." Impersonating Elvis is in part a way of living the proximity of one's working-class whiteness to black culture while aggressively forgetting that proximity.

Loftier ideals surround "late Elvis" and give new meaning to the term. A few of the performers are credited with sparking rumors of an Elvisian afterlife—"Elvis Alive and Well in Kalamazoo"—but more than a few have themselves been touched by his posthumous presence. Janice K, the Lady Elvis, experienced an Elvis visitation that left a nearby tree "scorched and singed." Mystical testimony abounds in *I Am Elvis*. "In the beginning there was the word and the word was Elvis," says Clayton Benke-Smith. Or this, from Sammy Stone Atchison: "Elvis was the most charismatic person ever on earth except for Jesus." These people are hardly crackpots and hallucinators; rather they indicate the force of V.S. Naipaul's view of Elvis in *A Turn in the South* (1989) as a sort of beatified redneck, with Graceland a version of the New Jerusalem. The last shall be first, proves this saint of the people.

Indeed, Elvis's excesses—the Cadillacs, the polyester, simple pleasures turned exorbitant "emblems of majesty," in Naipaul's phrase—appear for the entertainers in *I Am Elvis* to be a mode of self-assertion and imaginary beneficence. Several performers do only charity work, and others dream about the sudden, extraordinary gifts to friends of which Elvis was capable. Excess here means not upward mobility but a fantasy of imperial abundance, where manna meets the will to self-validation.

"For the record," says one impersonator, "I do *not* believe that [Elvis] is still

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alive." Not in the flesh, at least. One notes that the campy El Vez, the Mexican Elvis, has (not irrelevantly) been perceived as "blasphemous and regicidal"—crimes that prove that in the realm of the spirit, for better or worse, Elvis is more alive than ever. □

FILMS.

STUART KLAWANS

Summer Celluloid Meltdown

Spike Lee's new film, *Jungle Fever*, begins on Striver's Row in Harlem, in the sort of radiance that is a specialty of cinematographer Ernest Dickerson—a greenish-yellow morning light, as fresh and tart as an apple. The camera creeps into a window to discover a couple making love; their daughter, listening in the next room, giggles in delight. Two hours later and a couple of blocks away, *Jungle Fever* concludes with Dickerson's camera rocketing forward into a bleached-out wasteland; a man is screaming in despair at the proposal of a streetcorner blow job, offered by a prostitute who's addicted to crack.

If you were to reduce *Jungle Fever* to its dialogue, you might say that its core episode, the love affair between Flipper Purify (Wesley Snipes) and Angie Tucci (Annabella Sciorra), takes place in the context of racial and sexual stereotypes. As the late jazzmaster Art Blakey used to put it, opinions are like assholes—everybody's got one; and that's especially true in a Spike Lee film, in which people such as Flipper and Angie might well have been born just to give the other characters something to talk about. But if you watch the movie as well as listen to it, you might say that Flipper and Angie conduct their affair in an emotional space midway between the moods of the opening and closing scenes.

On the one side, you have the pleasure of everyday sights and sounds: the way a little girl's shoes slap the pavement as she walks to school, the timbre of Stevie Wonder's voice on the soundtrack, the textures of take-out food eaten late at night, under the glow of just a few lights in a darkened office. On the other side, you have the agony of losing contact with these simple things. Maybe, like Flipper, the afflicted person has messed up his marriage; maybe he's become an addict, like Flipper's brother, Gator (Samuel L. Jackson). Or maybe, as with Angie and her old boyfriend Paulie (John Turturro), stupid routine has made everyday life start to feel like a trap. For whatever reason, all these people have become deaf and blind to the riches with which Lee and Dickerson and production designer Wynn Thomas have surrounded them. They've turned inward, focusing on a single need or a fixed idea. In the case of Flipper and Angie, the horrible irony is that they have limited themselves in the very act of trying to expand their lives.

As played by Sciorra, Angie is open-faced and easy in her posture. She comes from Bensonhurst—a notoriously self-enclosed neighborhood—and feels its atmosphere is stifling her, but she doesn't seem limited by her background. From the way she introduces herself to Flipper, when she appears as a temporary secretary at his architectural office, you get the feeling she would have walked up the same way to Haile Selassie himself, stuck out her hand and said, "Hi." Flipper, for all his superiority to her in terms of education and experience, doesn't seem to feel half so much at home in the world. Snipes, who is a naturally strong actor, plays him against type, giving Flipper a suspicious glare that alternates with wide-eyed, pained bewilderment. Even when he's asserting himself against his bosses, Flipper seems held in; his voice is loud, but his arms stay close to the body, protecting him. To Flipper, Angie is a temporary refuge from the frustrations of his job, of his overbearing, puritanical father and impossible brother—perhaps as well from the constraints of maintaining a perfect marriage. To Angie, Flipper is nothing less than her ticket out of Bensonhurst—which means he's as big as the world itself. It's all the more hurtful, then, to hear Flipper tell her toward the end that she never really loved him, that she was "just curious about black." By withdrawing like that, reducing shared experience to a slogan, he insults not only Angie but himself.

A deeply sorrowful film with lots of funny moments, *Jungle Fever* lacks the visual jazz that animated *She's Gotta Have It* and the anger that sparked *Do the Right Thing*. It's less vivid than either of those pictures but also more firmly controlled. This time, Lee shows his directorial command largely through the way he works with the actors. You can see how he's let the principals collaborate with him in creating the characters; he also allows the actors enough latitude to improvise, most memorably in a rap session among Flipper's wife, Drew (Lonette McKee), and her friends. (An efficient response to the complaint that his female characters are weak: Lee invites a bunch of black women onto the set and turns the movie over to them for a while.) For in-your-face images, though, you will have to watch Lee's Air Jordan commercials. *Jungle Fever* does have one big set piece—Flipper's foray into a crack house in search of his brother—but I think Mario Van Peebles outdid that scene in his rather underrated *New Jack City*, and besides, the sequence leads nowhere in terms of the drama. It's mere scenery.

The other major complaint you might hear about *Jungle Fever* is that Flipper and Angie appear together too infrequently on the screen. Rubbish. If their encounter seems perfunctory, that's because it might have been, barring the effects of racism. First, social pressures turn a fling into a big-time affair; then the same pressures prevent the lovers from truly knowing each other. That's not schematic, allegorical, simple-minded or anything else that Spike Lee's harsher critics have charged him with. It's complicated and heartbreaking. It's how a film that begins with the murmurs of love concludes with a howl of agony.

I wish Spike Lee had been given the chance to direct *Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves*. Why not? The picture has been committed to triacetate solely to gratify and profit from the ego of Kevin Costner, and yet Costner is its central liability. As the world's first aw-shucks Robin Hood, he slurs the delivery of his nobler lines, stumbles past the more ironic ones, ambles and shrugs where a real hero might swashbuckle and generally comports himself as if he were starring in *Field of Thieves*. This leaves the film in the hands of its villain, Alan Rickman—who enjoys himself enormously but is perhaps getting to be too good at this sort of thing—and the actor on the set most capable of rhetorical grandeur, Morgan Freeman. This being a Hollywood-liberal *Robin Hood* for the '90s, Robin now has a Moorish sidekick—so why shouldn't Spike Lee have been given the helm? He'd surely have been better than the director of record, Kevin Reynolds, whose only distinction is to have given the picture a characteristically English look—that of an episode of *Dr. Who*. Oblivious to minor matters such as camera placement and editing, Reynolds generally throws a mobile camera against parts of actors' bodies, then cuts to vacant-seeming long shots, reducing action sequences to non-

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Euclidean jumbles. The cinematographer, Doug Milsome, does not help. *Robin Hood* looks as if it had been shot with an Instamatic and developed at Fotomat, for a total cost of $12.95.

But is it fun? Well, yes—dumb fun, sometimes tedious fun, disappointing fun. Still, after half an hour, when you've gotten used to Costner and the visual mediocrity, you can coast through *Robin Hood*, paying attention to the occasional witty lines or bits of action, letting the rest wash over you harmlessly. The filmmakers even have enough resources left at the end to offer you a surprise—such a good surprise, in fact, that it becomes a problem of its own. You look back over *Robin Hood* and sigh, realizing what you've been missing.

There's more fun to be had this summer from a number of much smaller films, starting with Carl Colpaert's *Delusion*. Whereas *Robin Hood* squanders millions trying none too steadily to revive the old adventure flick, *Delusion* succeeds pretty well in re-creating the sort of cheap, tawdry B-movie that you once could discover on your own and cherish.

A computer-company executive (Jim Metzler) packs $240,000 in illicit cash into the trunk of his Volvo and drives into the desert, on the way to a rendezvous. Suddenly, he comes upon a car wreck. Of course he should pass by the stranded couple; of course he doesn't. He offers a lift to the thuggish Chevy Cox (Kyle Secor) and Patti (Jennifer Rubin) and soon finds himself trapped by them, in his own car, in the middle of Death Valley.

Since the picture is titled *Delusion*, involves a new computer called a Mirage and makes use of one of Hitchcock's most celebrated McGuffins—the cash in the trunk—you might expect to have to match wits with the filmmaker. He's a worthy opponent. Early on, Colpaert shows you a tracking shot that seems to be taken from the computer executive's point of view; then the camera rises on a crane, and you realize you've been subtly tricked. An identification with the character has been teased out of you and then dissolved. By the end of the movie, that sort of doubledealing has become a theme. Whose story is this? Which character should you really be following? The answer doesn't hit you until the closing credits—and it's a delight.

Slacker, written and directed by Richard Linklater, is a hilarious twenty-four-hour tour through the student quarter of Austin, Texas. Featuring some one hundred actors, almost all of them nonprofessionals, the film careens nonstop from character to idle character, all the while collecting scraps of absurd, cynical, disengaged, delusional world views. The camera might loiter for a minute in a coffee shop, then follow someone out the door, then get distracted by a couple of passers-by and track them for a while until something more interesting seems to offer itself. Nothing is all *that* interesting in the world of *Slacker*, though, and so the camera moves on again, like a dissolute American *flâneur*. It mimics the cast of conspiracy theorists, anti-artists, post-punk musicians, hitchhikers, mythomaniacal anarchists, video obsessives, people who are cruising for a date but say they are not, people who are too odd even to think about dating, all of whom are wasting time while busily honing their attitudes. *Slacker* is one of the joys of the summer movie season—and excellent material for a time capsule.

Trust, which opens in late July, is the new film by Hal Hartley, whose first feature, *The Unbelievable Truth*, won a lot of attention but seemed to me too cute by half. Hartley again sets his film in the working-class suburbs of Long Island and gives the starring role to Adrienne Shelly, a big-lipped, petulant-looking young actress with a Betty Boop voice. This time, though, his combination of deadpan dialogue and hyperbolical events seems to have clicked. Maria (the Shelly character) is teenaged, pregnant and has just learned she can't count on her boyfriend for anything. Her prospects are dim, until she meets Matthew (Martin Donovan), a bookish *enragé* in his mid-20s, who could use some salvaging himself. What follows is like an East Coast, blue-collar version of an Alan Rudolph film—charmingly akilter, almost sentimental, knowing, funny, brisk.

Forever Activists, an hour-long documentary by Judith Montell, opened in New York City in mid-June and is making its way gradually around the country. Lively and blessedly unpreachy, the film focuses on seven veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, not only on what they did in Spain but why they went in the first place and what they've done since. In the words of one, last seen jogging at a recent peace march in San Francisco, "We were premature antifascists, then mature antifascists, now we're senior antifascists."

Finally, for those in the New York area, Film Forum kicks off its summer schedule with a series of jazz films, including not-to-be-missed items such as

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Shirley Clarke's *The Cool World*, the rediscovered *Sweet Love, Bitter* (with Dick Gregory playing a character modeled on Charlie Parker), various archival compilations and a "Best of the Fest" program on the final night, July 11. From July 12 through August 8, Film Forum will present a retrospective of the work of Sam Fuller (the filmmaker that *Delusion*'s Carl Colpaert would like to be). The fifth annual Summer Festival of Fantasy, Horror and Science Fiction runs from August 9 through September 19 and encompasses everything from Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast* through *Retik, the Moon Menace*.

But leave time to go as well to the Museum of Modern Art, which will be presenting an exhibition titled "Junction and Journey: Trains and Film" through September 30. A delightfully eclectic survey of the movies' love affair with the railroad, the series is in effect an alternative history of film, from the first publicly projected movie—the Lumière brothers' *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station*—through Chantal Akerman's *Les Rendez-vous d'Anna*, with stops in between for everything from *Tokyo Story* to *How the West Was Won.* □

MUSIC.

GENE SANTORO

Lift Every Voice and Sing

Anybody who's attended urban storefront or rural clapboard churches or tuned in to their Sunday evening radio broadcasts has been hit with a sense of its power: the stomping feet that shudder the walls, the yearning vocals that swell out of any proportion to the congregation's size, the incantatory preaching with its fervent call-and-response. This is the heartland of African-American gospel, whose intense and highly wrought musical styles have seeded leaders from W.E.B. Du Bois to Martin Luther King Jr. to Jesse Jackson. Not coincidentally, gospel provided some of the civil rights' and antiwar movements' most stirring anthems.

Black gospel grew out of the racially mixed American spirituals tradition and the Pentecostal revivalism rampant during the early part of this century. It's as peculiarly American a hybrid as its contemporaries and cultural antagonists/partners, blues and jazz, and its secular stepchild by them, rock and roll. As Anthony Heilbut put it in his recently revised *The Gospel Sound* (HarperCollins/Limelight Editions), which is still the best overview of the style, "Its language combined the stately periods of eighteenth-century prose with the richness of southern country talk and ghetto slang." Back in 1971, Heilbut was also among the first to point out rock's roots in gospel—a notion that others, like Peter Guralnick in his *Sweet Soul Music* (HarperCollins), have since detailed.

Gospel's internal conundrums are twisty and rich. White Protestant hymnals served as a foundation for a very different musical approach as slaves reshaped them in the light of their African heritage. (In the early 1800s, slaves held their own "brush arbor" services after the official ones, whence come allegorical "sorrow songs" like "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot.") In *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois explained, "As bard, physician, judge, and priest, within the narrow limits allowed by the slave system, rose the Negro preacher, and under him the first church was not at first by any means Christian nor definitely organized; rather it was an adaptation and mingling of heathen rites among the members of each plantation, and roughly designated as Voodooism. Association with the masters, missionary effort and motives of expediency gave these rites an early veneer of Christianity, and after the lapse of many generations the Negro church became Christian." Given the historical context, it may not be surprising that African-American gospel songwriters described biblical figures like Solomon and Jesus as black. In the process, they nourished an Afrocentric tradition.

Ironically, gospel's fierce undercurrents of sexuality are enough at times to make you want to tear somebody else's clothes off despite its apparent prudishness and sanctified lyrics. According to Heilbut and other observers, that happens very frequently indeed when gospel singers meet their church groupies. Jubilation is a mighty aphrodisiac. This may be unsurprising in our post-Jimmy Swaggart era, but its significance in the black gospel scene, as Du Bois and others have pointed out, lies elsewhere. In African cultures, the line between ritual and sexuality—between ritual and life—is usually placed quite differently from where it is in European Christianity. In the former, rites are an integrated part of the social fabric and mark key passages and turning points in ways that parallel the relationship that devout urban-ghetto and poor rural folk in this country have with their churches.

Like most theologians, gospel adherents divide the world into the saved and the un-, which has yielded odd and ironic but enriching cultural byproducts over the past few decades. Take the manifold but always uneasy (and sometimes downright acrimonious) dialogue of the past half-century between African-American gospel music and its popular counterparts, from blues to rock and hip-hop. Plato's portrait of the artist as a partially sighted, parasitic misleader is no stranger to gospel. Gospel vocalists take well-justified pride in their jazzy flights of improvisation, but they almost always cite their virtuosity's end as transcendent salvation. For them, art without a theological or philosophical harness is out of control. So churchgoing folk have always despised blues players, for instance, for their refusal to abide by "traditional" values, their racy lyrics, the sexual innuendo of their rhythms, the goings-on where they perform, their references to black magic and other vestigial descendants of African belief systems.

In their turn, the feelings of blues folk toward their religious brethren have run an apparently bewildering gamut. Many blues greats shuttled between the sacred and the profane. Some of them, like Skip James, lapsed into silence for decades because they wouldn't sing "the Devil's music" once they returned to the church. If they had, of course, they would have been expelled. That's part of the reason for the venom of the great Son House's "Preachin' Blues." As a boy, House dutifully learned the church ways his father practiced. By his own account (given to Sam Charters in *The Blues Makers*) he was sincerely devout. Then he dropped it all to become a bluesman, and wrote the scathing "Preachin' Blues," whose opening lines are, "I'm gonna get me religion and I'm gonna join the Baptist church/You know I want to be a Baptist preacher so I won't have to work."

Interestingly, there's also a small but dynamic tradition of spiritual blues singers (some are collected on *Preachin' The Gospel: Holy Blues* [Columbia/Legacy]). Blind Willie Johnson, a truly scary bottleneck guitarist who was a contemporary of Blind Lemon Jefferson, drew haunting renditions of now-classics like "Dark Was the Night." Charley Patton, the fountainhead of Mississippi Delta blues, recorded religious as well as secular tunes. For his Library of Congress field

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recordings, Muddy Waters played spirituals. Adherents like the Rev. Gary Davis backed religious lyrics with ragtime guitar. Sister Rosetta Tharpe, propelled by her guitar and a jazz-band backing, scored gospel's first crossover best seller with the hard-swinging "Rock Me." And in the Caribbean, where the white-hymnals-meet-blues tradition is remarkably like ours, Bahamas guitarist Joseph Spence in his unique way recaps the street-singer tradition, which includes Blind Willie Johnson's religious duets with his wife.

This meeting of the sacred and profane has flowed in the other direction as well. The '40s harmonies of groups like the Mills Brothers and the Ink Spots were gospel-derived, and paved the way for '50s doo-woppers who likewise crossed gospel into pop. Soul music and soul jazz of the '60s also grew directly out of gospel, which turns on pyrotechnic vocal exhortations and improvisations. Many r&b performers did like Ray Charles, who appropriated a gospel ditty for his sexy shout, "I Got a Woman." Singers like B.B. King, Bobby (Blue) Bland and Dinah Washington all annexed churchy melismas and moans into their secular heartaches. Early soulsters like Solomon Burke, who himself vacillated between church and secular worlds, adapted preaching-style monologues and call-and-response female backup vocals. Wilson Pickett's gruff confessing came right out of the gospel-quartet tradition he'd been raised in. And Aretha Franklin, whose father, C.L., was one of the black church's famed preachers, heard heaven's door slam shut behind her when she testified with a ferocious vengeance in Top-40 hit after hit.

Like Aretha, some artists were faced with hard choices because of the gospel world's harsh attitude toward secular backsliders. Sam Cooke started his career singing with the famed gospel quartet the Soul Stirrers, but he had to change his name when he secretly cut his first soul singles. Once he decided to go overtly secular, his gospel career was instantly over. (His murder at a motel, complete with sexual scandal, had gospel folks shaking their heads with a grim sense of expectation fulfilled.) Then there's the Rev. Al Green, whose silky Cooke-ish singing has been transformed into a kind of incandescent religious ecstasy—a St. John of the Cross for soul music. A house-rocking preacher with his own congregation in Memphis these days, the reverend has changed almost nothing about his music and lyrics except their putative addressee—which makes him feel (with some justification) still unaccepted by his gospel peers. As you might expect, he also projects a more tolerant attitude toward pop culture than most of his brothers of the cloth.

Their labors reflect the glory of God but shout the glory of humanity.

One of the few links in the tradition who reconciled his secular and sacred sides was Thomas A. Dorsey. Dorsey is, in essence, gospel's godfather. He recharged the sentiments of widely used hymns like Dr. Isaac Watts's and Dr. C.A. Tindley's (who at the turn of the century merged black folk material with poor white evangelism) with bluesy structures, composing thousands of gospel standards that became the movement's bedrock. With singer Sallie Martin, he founded the Gospel Singers Convention and helped pave "the gospel highway," the touring routes that established the music as the lingua franca of black (and many white) churches throughout the land. (As Heilbut rightly argues, populism coexists with reaction in the evangelical movement: Aimee Semple McPherson's services, for instance, were always integrated, and in 1936 they featured Martin.) In his earlier incarnation as bluesman Georgia Tom, Dorsey had accompanied Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith, and as partners with guitarist Tampa Red he had penned and recorded any number of highly suggestive tunes like "It's Tight Like That." But Heilbut reported twenty years ago that "he is completely secure in his several roles and feels no qualms about his life in show business. He remains a member in good standing of the Chicago Musicians Union, and his attic studio is filled with pictures and records of Georgia Tom. 'No, no,' his voice cracks calmly, 'I'm not ashamed of my blues. It's all the same talent, a beat is a beat whatever it is.' "

Since ritual is art's earliest source, it's no surprise that gospel music radiates a visceral power that can thrill the most devout atheist. And it continues to evolve a long way from its bluesy "folk" early days and the barbershop-quartet-based jubilee style of the '30s, with its simple piano or guitar backing. In the '60s James Cleveland, gospel's "Crown Prince," pioneered more complex melodies and harmonies, and in the '70s the likes of Andrae Crouch and Edwin Hawkins led choirs that mimicked contemporary pop formulas. Today, younger contenders like Green and Philip Bailey take on hip-hop rhythms and synthesizer sonics as well.

Getting a sense of the spread and wealth of gospel music is a bit easier now than it's been for a while, since the new audiences and higher profit margins created by the compact disc have moved record companies to rummage through the vaults for this material, as they already have for blues and jazz. So it happens that three fine compilations, each with a particular purview, have hit the marketplace recently. *I Hear Music in the Air* (BMG) offers a solid intro to the early folk quartet days with the likes of the Rev. J.M. Gates and the Golden Gate Jubilee Quartet. *The Gospel Sound of Spirit Feel* (Spirit Feel)—from Heilbut's own tiny but outstanding label—casts its net wider. It serves up essential contributing artists, including Clara Ward, Mahalia Jackson and Sister Rosetta Tharpe, as well as seminal sweet-gospel quartets like the Dixie Hummingbirds, the Fairfield Four and the Sensational Nightingales.

The Specialty label was central to gospel in the '50s, as it ironically was to rock and roll. Owner Art Rupe recorded not only the cream of contemporary gospel quartets but emerging gospel-driven rockers like Little Richard and Sam Cooke. *Greatest Gospel Gems* (Specialty) is a sterling selection from the label's motherlode, with gems from Sam Cooke with the Soul Stirrers, the Travelers, the Swan Silvertones, Alex Bradford, Dorothy Love Coates, Sister Wynona Carr and James Cleveland.

For many observers, gospel's golden age comes with the postwar period, the so-called sweet-gospel era. That's when record companies began capturing the sounds of male quartets like the Soul Stirrers. During that era the quartets grew into quintets and sextets and moved from the simpler antiphonal and chordal backings of jubilee to close harmonies supporting contrasting dual lead voices (usually a liquid tenor and a gruff light baritone) who trade off and improvise within a denser call-and-response format. Specialty plans to reissue Stirrers classics with both Cooke and his mentor/model, Rebert Harris, as well as the bristling and intense material by the heart-stopping Dixie Hummingbirds. In the meantime, grab the Swan Silvertones' *My Rock/Love Lifted Me* (Specialty) or the Pilgrim

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Travelers' *The Best of the Pilgrim Travelers* (Specialty). The Silvertones' tenor, Claude Jeter, is another whose lilting, fiery flights became a model for soul, and the group's smooth-but-pulsating harmonizing remains a gospel hallmark. The Travelers were massively influenced, as were many, by the Harris-era Soul Stirrers, but that doesn't diminish their yearning musicality.

The next decade saw the triumph of "hard gospel" quartets like the Original Five Blind Boys of Alabama, whose appearance a few years back in the wonderful Greek-tragedy-goes-gospel *Oedipus at Colonus* stopped the show. Lead vocalist Clarence Fountain is an incandescently ragged stylist who incarnates the physical growling and piercing screams of this period on *Oh Lord—Stand By Me/ Marching up to Zion* (Specialty).

Women also rocked out in small groups. *The Best of Dorothy Love Coates and the Original Gospel Harmonettes* (Specialty) is one of the finest examples. Coates folds race consciousness and poetically charged recastings of received images into her scintillating songs, then fires them via her torn but amazing voice, which dips and whirls and leaps over intervals with throaty abandon. You can hear her echoed in pop singers like Mavis Staples, whose own background is gospel with the Staples Singers; and Irma Thomas, the soul queen of New Orleans, who still sings in church every Sunday.

The greatest women soloists, like Sallie Martin, Mahalia Jackson and Clara Ward, have been tireless and indispensable gospel workers. One of the greatest vocalists in the Bessie Smith tradition is Marion Williams, whose sturdy, nuanced *Strong Again* (Spirit Feel) finesses older styles (it boasts a version of Billie Holiday's "God Bless the Child," for instance). Heilbut has written tellingly, "She defines and reconciles her twin dispositions, for she is both a modest saint . . . and an overwhelming showman. The two impulses . . . aren't always balanced, but when spirit and style converge, the result is unparalleled. . . . If she's saved to the utmost, she's also as worldly as any other gospel singer."

That duality is at gospel's heart. In the end, by lifting their voices with the incredible expressivity and dazzling technique that they've developed, gospel artists resemble the great medieval church builders. Their labors are intended to reflect the glory of God, but they shout as loudly about the glory of humanity, its ability to triumph over its apparent limitations. □

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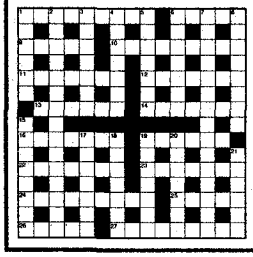

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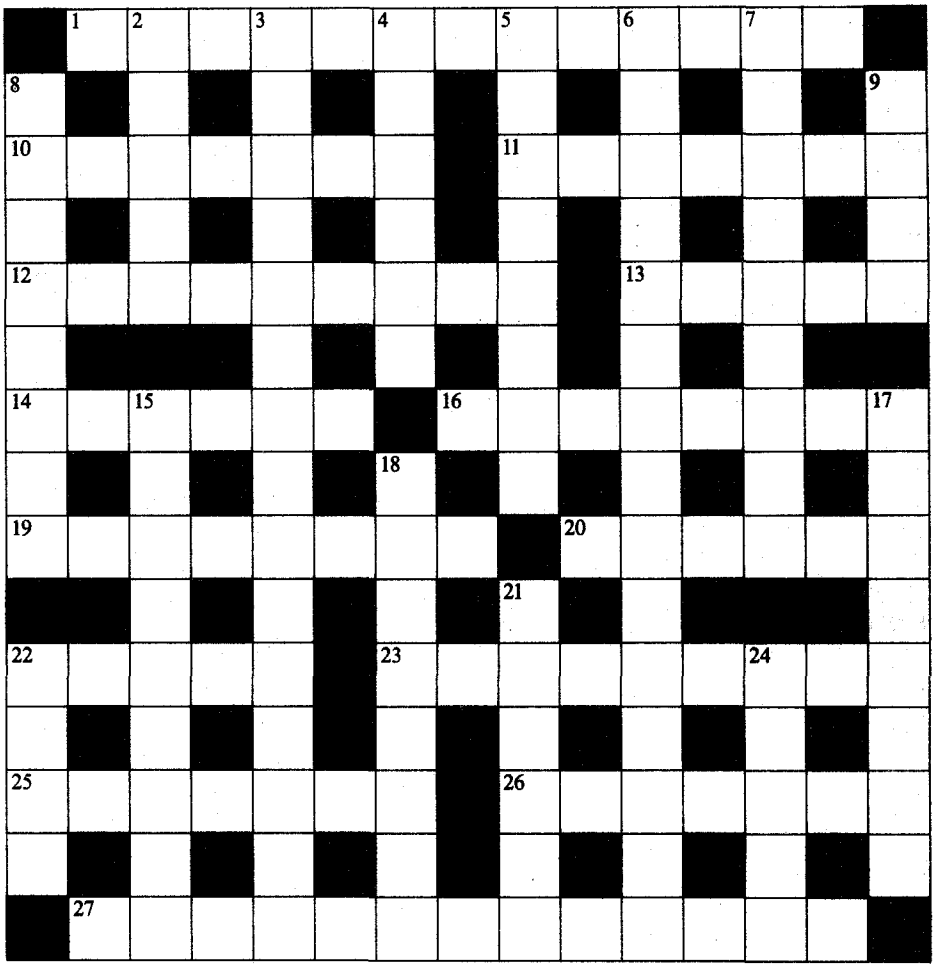
Crossword Puzzle No. 2344

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 How some new arrivals might speak of a shingle? (6,7)
10 Very, very different from 21-22 down. (1,3,3)
11 Oklahoma, perhaps, in part comes from us, I calculate. (7)
12 Make someone mad about what might be just out with a lot of attendants. (9)
13 A slightly altered form of Bahai found in Brazil. (5)
14 The mythical beast seems to go painfully slow! (6)
16 One might hope to be a professor. (Ur-Hannibal stew?) (8)
19 In the light of danger, raced around with what make lots of lead pencils. (3,5)
20 A little firm, but not quite near the part of the eye some have trouble with. (6)
22 This part of the horse's equipment should be easy to deal with. (5)
23 Does what might be implied by a lot of X's on letters. (9)
25 Its role is different, but hangs around anyway. (7)
26 They used to throw stones in the old days, the beasts! (7)
27 It involves getting rid of down-in-the-mouth hangers-on. (13)

DOWN

2 Astor-prepared menus might feature it. (5)
3 What the boss does upstairs with caddish incompetent workers that can't be fired? (Have fun!) (4,2,4,5)
4 How they talk when they can't find anything good or any sort to speak. (3-3)
5 Our days are supposed to be unfeeling, superior to a broken reed. (8)
6 What the shoemaker needs with a broken button gets sort of stale proving the end is not unimportant. (4,3,3,5)
7 Car chains might be necessary to make it here, but you might consider the results sweet. (9)
8 One should have a date with what sounds like Rimsky-Korsakov's prince! (8)
9 What one might make at the bench, as they say, is sort of pale. (4)
15 It's a little slow, as well as *The Nation* edited! (9)
17 Prophets confused about a fool might size something up again! (8)
18 The country has something to sing about! (You can 3 down if you're having one.) (8)
21 and 22 down Even though it could have been dangerous, you don't usually need to dial one to begin to make it. (1,5,4)
24 The kind of little room that measures heat. (5)

PUZZLED?

No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules," send for those of Mr. Lewis to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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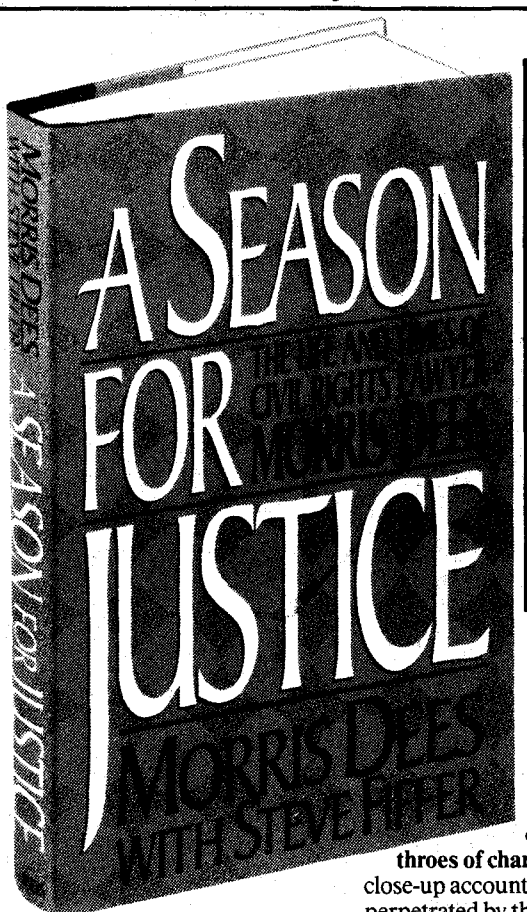

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